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THE

BIBLE HISTORY

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BY JOHN KITTO, D.D., F.S.A.

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THE BIBLE HISTORY.

BOOK II.

THE PATRIARCHS.

Dept. of the Interior.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE.

The History of the Hebrew people, may be most conveniently commenced with the call of Abraham, which, according to Hales, took place in the year of the world 3258, after the deluge 1062 years, and 2153 years before the birth of Christ*.

The ages which had passed since the deluge, concurring with the still long duration of human life, had again replenished with people the regions around the original seats of the human race. That great event, the confusion of tongues, which occurred 600 years after the deluge, must have greatly accelerated, and even compelled, more energetic movements than had previously taken place.

The descendants of Shem appear to have extended themselves gradually over the regions east and north-east of the river Tigris; the children of Japhet spread themselves into Asia Minor, whence it was their ultimate destination to be impelled into Europe, and to fill the length and breadth of that continent. The posterity of Ham remained in chief possession of Mesopotamia; they also formed settlements at the head of the Persian Gulf, in Arabia, and in Canaan; they established empires in Assyria and Egypt; and, as their numbers multiplied, they advanced into Ethiopia, and other remoter parts of the African peninsula.

* See note at end of the chapter.

The history of Japhet's race is a blank in the early accounts of the Scriptures; and that of Shem's is little more. The sacred historian confines his notice to one family of Shem's descendants; and the intercourse of that family with the races of Ham, is the circumstance which evolves far more information concerning their early history and condition than we possess concerning any of the other descendants of Noah. From all that history tells, they appear to have been the first authors of the arts of civilisation and social life. But, remembering the other races of which authentic history takes no occasion to speak, this need not be positively affirmed. That, however, very important advancements had, even in this remote age, been made by the posterity of Ham, appears very plainly in the early intercourse of the Hebrew patriarchs with Egypt.

A division of the posterity of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, left the Arabian shores of the Red Sea, and settled in the country whose history we have undertaken to write; and they gave to it the name of their father, from whom also they are, collectively, called Canaanites. They manifestly were not very numerous at the time this history opens. They did not by any means fill the country, but lived dispersed, in detached and independent clans, and, contented with the use of such lands around their towns as they

needed for their own subsistence, they beheld without jealousy powerful emirs, even of the race of Shem, establish themselves in the plains and feed their cattle in the vacant pastures. The time for territorial contests had not yet come; and probably the settled Canaanites regarded the presence of the Bedouin sheikhs as an advantage, relieving them from the need of attention to pastoral affairs by affording a ready market where they might obtain milk, butter, cheese, meat, and skins, in exchange for their surplus corn and other vegetable produce; and they appear to have been quite sensible of the advantages of an open traffic with the pastoral chiefs.

It might be easy enough to work out a plausible and ingenious account of the social condition of the Canaanites at the time when Abraham came among them. But as this must be purely conjectural, or founded on circumstances which did not occur till four or five centuries later, during which it cannot be doubted that great changes took place in their civil and political state, we shall avoid such a course, and confine ourselves to the slight notices which may be gleaned from the history of Abraham, with the very few more which the histories of his son and grandson offer.

Their language was the same as that of Abraham and the other patriarchs, who at all times speak to them without the medium of an interpreter. This was also true ages after, whenever any communication took place between the descendants of Abraham and the Canaanites or the Phœnicians.

They were divided into a number of small independent communities. Every town with a small surrounding district, and probably some dependent villages, appears to have been a sovereign state, acknowledging the control of no superior, but being in alliance with its neighbours for common objects. The vale of Siddim alone, the area of which does not exceed that of one of our smallest counties, is known to have contained five of such states. It appears to have been the plan, as the population increased, to establish new cities and new states on ground not previously appropriated; in which case the tendency to consolidate numerous small states into a few large ones would not, in ordinary circumstances, arise till the country was fully peopled. We may well be astonished at the prodigious number of small states which the Hebrews found in Palestine on their return from Egypt; but we do not, with some, infer that they were equally numerous in the time of Abraham. On the contrary, it rather seems to us that, in the long interval, the towns and states went on increasing with the population. That towns and states were as numerous in choice localities, such as the fertile vale of Siddim, in the time of Abraham as in that of Joshua, we can well understand; but not so in the country at large. It seems also that the states, though fewer, were not larger at the former date than at the latter, the extent of ground which they divided being proportionably smaller. At both periods the states of the Canaanites suggest a comparison to our own boroughs, consisting of a town, with dependencies of fields, and perhaps villages.

And the comparison perhaps holds further; for the *meleks* or kings of those tiny kingdoms do not appear to have been more than chief magistrates, or patriarchal chiefs, with very limited powers. The mayors of our boroughs have probably greater civil power than they had. Indeed, it has more than once occurred to us to doubt whether these meleks had any independent civil power, and whether they were not regarded merely as the military commanders of the people in time of war, and at all times the agent of their public transactions with other states. The real power, civil and political, of these small states seems to have remained in the body of the adult male population, and practically, it may seem, in the elder portion of it, from that deference which was paid to seniority in those early times. When Simon and Levi, the sons of Jacob, proposed on certain conditions an alliance with Hamor, the Canaanitish prince of Shechem, the latter was well pleased with the proposal, but would not conclude on what answer to give until he had consulted the citizens in the gate. The same tenor of conduct always ap-

pears when occasions arise. In some cases so little notice is taken of the melek, that it may almost be doubted whether particular states had any such functionary. A public transaction about a transfer of land with such "a mighty emir" as Abraham was well calculated to require the presence of any prince which the Hittites of Hebron might have had, but no one appears in the account of that transaction. Abraham bows to "the children of Heth;" he addresses his proposals to them, and they reply to him. If the Hittites had a king, he was doubtless present; and if so, the manner in which he was overlooked, or in which he is included without distinction as one of "the children of Heth," strikingly illustrates the position of the melek in these small communities. The only other alternative seems to be that the Hittites of Hebron had no king in the time of Abraham.

All the states in the vale of Siddim had kings, and all we know of them is that they were the military leaders in war. From the answer of the king of Sodom to Abraham, waiving all claim to the goods which the patriarch had recovered from the Mesopotamian spoilers, without any reference to the wishes of his people in this matter, we may infer that, as might be expected, the melek had higher powers in all warlike matters than were allowed to him in the affairs of peace. The only other act of a Canaanitish king which we meet with implies nothing in this respect. This was the act of Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who brought refreshments to Abraham and his party when he returned from the slaughter of the kings.

The mention of this remarkable person leads us to observe that there is not in Scripture the least indication that the Canaanites were idolaters in the time of Abraham, or indeed at any time before the house of Israel went down into Egypt. The king of Salem is expressly declared to have been a priest of the Most High God; and whenever suitable occasion offers, it appears that the Canaanites knew and reverenced the God of their fathers. It is true that they knew not this God as Abraham knew him; and it is more than likely that, with some exceptions, such as that of Melchizedek, they had sunk into that state of indifference, and of ignorance concerning God's characters and attributes, which was but a too suitable preparation for that actual idolatry into which they ultimately fell. But that there was any positive idolatry in the time of Abraham, or before the patriarchs left the land, we see no reason to conclude. If we look at the remarkable case of the destruction of Sodom and the cities of the plain, we cannot fail to observe that idolatry is nowhere alluded to as one of the crimes for which the inhabitants were punished. They were punished because they were "sinners before the Lord exceedingly," and because there were not among them any righteous or just men. What the character of their sins was we know. The repugnance of Isaac and Rebekah to the marriage of their sons with Canaanitish women, has often been alleged as a proof that they were by that time become idolaters, even by many who allow that they were not such in the time of Abraham. But the cited case proves nothing whatever, and could only have been adduced from that ignorance of the manners of the East which is now in a course of removal. The ideas of the patriarchal emirs required that their sons should marry into their own families, and this would have been frustrated by marriage with Canaanites. If this argument for the idolatry of the Canaanites be applicable to the time of Isaac's latter days, it must be equally applicable to the time of Abraham, for he was as anxious as Isaac could be that his son should obtain a wife from the house of his fathers in Padan-aram. But this argument is used by those who confess that the Canaanites were *not* idolaters in the days of Abraham.

We have little information concerning the social condition, arts, and occupations of the Canaanites at this early date. That "the Canaanites by the sea," that is, the Phœnicians, had already taken to the sea, and carried on some traffic with the neighbouring coasts, is very likely, but more than we can affirm. But we know that the people of Canaan lived in walled towns, in the gates of which public business was transacted.

They cultivated the ground; they grew corn; and, as they had wine, they must have cultivated the vine; which they probably did upon the sides of the hills, terraced for the purpose according to that fashion of vine culture which has always prevailed in that country. Some find in the Perizzites a body of Canaanitish pastors, moving about with their flocks and herds, without any fixed dwelling. But as all this is founded upon a doubtful etymology, we shall lay no stress upon it. Doubtless the Canaanites had cattle, and paid some attention to pasturage; but the presence, in their unappropriated lands, of pastoral chiefs like Abraham, who, by making it their sole pursuit, enjoyed peculiar advantages in the rearing of cattle, and could offer the produce of their flocks and herds on very easy terms to the settled inhabitants, was likely to prevent the latter from being much engaged in pastoral undertakings. Of their military character at this early period we know little, and that little is not much to their advantage. They were beaten in every one of the warlike transactions of this age which the Scriptures relate, or to which any allusion is made. Doubtless every adult male knew the use of arms, and was liable to be called upon to use them when any public occasion required.

They had arrived to the use of silver as a medium of exchange, and that the silver was weighed in affairs of purchase and sale involves the use of the scale and balanced beam. In what form they exhibited the silver used for money we know not with any certainty; they certainly had no coined money; for even the Egyptians, who were far before the Canaanites in all the arts of civilisation, continued long after this to use circular bars, or rings, of silver for money; and, most likely, the silver money of the Canaanites bore the same form.

The description of the burying-ground which Abraham bought for 400 shekels of silver of Ephron the Hittite, may perhaps inform us concerning the sepulchres in which the Canaanites liked to bury their dead. It was a cave in a spot of ground well planted with trees.

Seeing that there will hereafter be frequent occasion to mention by name the several tribes of Canaanites inhabiting the land, and that some of them are historically connected with the early history of the Hebrews, it will conduce to the clearness of the ensuing narrative, if, in this place, these tribes be enumerated, and their several seats pointed out.

While the whole of the nation, collectively, bore the name of Canaanites, as descended from Canaan, there are occasions in which the Scriptures apply the name in a special manner to a part of the whole. Thus in Exodus iii. 8, we read, "the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites;" and so in other places, except that the Girgashites are sometimes also named. We know that there were many tribes not included in this list of names, and the question is, to which or to what portion of those unnamed, the name of Canaanites is here given. The question is thought a perplexed one, and there appear some serious objections to all the explanations which we have seen. We therefore satisfy ourselves with the notion, that this is merely a method of summary statement to avoid the frequent repetition of a long list of names: that, first, "the Canaanites" are put for all those clans not intended to be particularly enumerated; and then follow the names of those tribes which were best known to the Hebrews and of the most importance to them. This view is confirmed by our observing that the tribes *not* named, and which we, therefore, suppose to be included under the name of Canaanites, are precisely those most remote from the early Hebrews, and with whom they had the least to do. That they are in other texts described as situated "at the sea," corresponds with the same intimation. In a general sense it will, under this explanation, be found to embrace, primarily, those several branches of the posterity of Canaan which settled on the northern coast, and were, collectively, known in general history as the Phœnicians. The matter appears to have been thus understood by the Seventy; for they render the Hebrew in Josh. v. 1, for

"kings of the Canaanites (which were by the sea)," by "kings of the Phœnicians:" and many ages after, the names were interchangeable; for the woman whom one Evangelist (Matt. xv. 22) calls "a woman of Canaan," is called by another (Mark vii. 26), "a Syro-Phœnician woman."

Whether the families of Canaan in migrating to the country to which they gave his name, were headed by his sons, from whom they took their own distinguishing names, or removed after their deaths, does not by any means appear. The question does not seem of much importance, except as it might help to fix the time of the first occupation of the country; and we allude to it merely that no forms of expression which we may incidentally use, should be considered to involve the expression of any opinion on the subject. There is, however, sufficient evidence that the Canaanites had been a good while settled in the land, and we are repeatedly assured in Scripture that the Hittite city of Hebron was founded seven years before Zoan in Egypt.

The Hebrew patriarchs, during their sojourn in Canaan, never approached the borders of the Phœnicians, and, consequently, *they* are not mentioned in the history, unless under the name of Canaanites. Indeed, we should not have been assured that the Phœnician tribes were descended from Canaan, were it not for the genealogy in Gen. x., which gives us a list of his sons, and assures us that all their families settled in Canaan. In this list the name of Sidon occurs first, as that of Canaan's first-born son. He was the father of the Sidonians, the chief of the Phœnician tribes; and the great, commercial, and very ancient city of Sidon, the mother of the still greater Tyre, was called after him. The list includes other names which cannot but be considered as those of families which, along with the Sidonians, history comprehends under the Phœnician name. Such are the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, and the Zemarites, whose territories seem to have extended along the coast, northward from the town and territory of Sidon.

The ancient Phœnician city of Arca probably took its name from the Arkites, and, therefore, will serve to indicate their situation. Arca stood nearly midway between Tripoli and Tortosa, and about five miles from the sea, among the lower ranges of Lebanon, fronting the sea-board plain. Here, in a situation commanding a beautiful view over the plain, the sea, and the mountains, Burckhardt found ruins, which he supposes to be those of Arca, consisting of large and extensive mounds, traces of ancient dwellings, blocks of hewn stone, remains of walls, and fragments of granite columns. To the north was a hill, apparently artificial, still bearing the name of Tel Arka, and on which the temple or the citadel probably stood in former times.

In the parts adjoining was an ancient city bearing the name of Sin, and which, in connexion with other circumstances, may be thought to indicate the situation of the Sinites. This city had, so far back as the time of Jerome, long been ruined by war; but the site on which it once stood still retained this ancient name.

The Arvadites are said by Josephus to have occupied and given their name to the small island of Aradus, called Arpad and Arphad in the Scriptures*, and the inhabitants of which are by Ezekiel mentioned along with the Sidonians, as taking an active part in the maritime commerce of Tyre. This island, which is about one league from the shore, and not above a mile in circumference, ultimately became the port and chief town of this enterprising and prosperous section of the Phœnician people; and there was a time when even Romans regarded with admiration its lofty houses, built with more stories than those of Rome, and its cisterns hewn in the rock. All this, except the cisterns and some fragments of wall, has passed away; but Arvad is still the seat of a town, and, being a mart of transit, its inhabitants are still all engaged in commerce. Though the island was the favourite seat of the people, as their wealth and peace were there safe from the wars and troubles of the continent, and their shipping needed not to hazard the dangers of the coast, they were

* 2 Kings xix. 13; Ezek. xxvii. 8.

by no means without possessions on the mainland, for their dominion along the shore extended from Tortosa *, which lay opposite their island, northward to Jebilee. They were, therefore, the most northernly of the Phœnician people †.

The Zemarites are mentioned next to the Arvadites, and, correspondingly, they are usually, and with sufficient reason, placed next to that people, southward, on the coast, where, twenty miles to the south of Antaradus, and four miles to the north of Orthosia, close upon the shore, was a town called Zimyra, to the site of which the name of Zumrah is still given.

The Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, and Zemarites, are scarcely mentioned *historically* in the Scriptures: and were it not for the tenth chapter of Genesis, it would be unknown to us that they claimed a common origin with the other inhabitants of Canaan. Indeed, their territory can scarcely be considered as within the limits of Canaan Proper; and their distance, as well as their being ranked in the general Phœnician body, with which the relations of the Jews were neutral and sometimes amicable, secured them a happy exemption from that notice in the Sacred Records which would have resulted from such hostile acts as took place between the Jews and the other Canaanitish tribes.

This much may at present suffice concerning the Phœnicians, whose historical importance is of later date than the times of which we now more particularly treat.

Next to the Zemarites, the Hamathites are mentioned in the list through which we are passing; and, on several accounts, we were disposed to include them in the preceding statement as one of the Phœnician tribes; but, as our information concerning the Phœnicians makes it difficult to regard them otherwise than as a people inhabiting the coast, which the Hamathites did not, it seems as well to notice them separately.

Their situation is determined, without any difficulty, by that of the city of Hamath or Hamah, so called after them, and which after having borne the Greek name of Epiphania, imposed upon it by the Macedonian kings of Syria, has now resumed its ancient name. It is situated sixty miles inland from the Mediterranean, eastward from Antaradus and not less than 100 miles to the north of Damascus: it was, therefore, distant from the country known to the patriarchs; and although its territory appears to have reached to some extent southward, it was not involved in those wars which attended the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrew people. Yet, although scarcely more noticed, historically, in Scripture than the kindred tribes which have already passed under our notice, it happens that the *name* of Hamath is of very frequent occurrence there. This is because the territory of the Hamathites lay on the extreme northern border of the Promised Land, whence "the entering in of Hamath" is often mentioned as a point to which the extreme line of northern boundary was drawn. But this boundary appears to have only ceased to be nominal during the reigns of David and Solomon, whose dominion, doubtless, extended to the borders of Hamah, if it did not include a part or the whole of the Hamathite territory.

Hamah is one of those few very ancient towns which still exist as places of some note. It is situated on both sides of the Orontes; and is, for that country, a well-built and comfortable town, the population of which is estimated at 30,000. The town has still, in one sense, a territory, being the seat of a district government, which comprehends 120 inhabited villages, and over seventy or eighty which have been abandoned ‡.

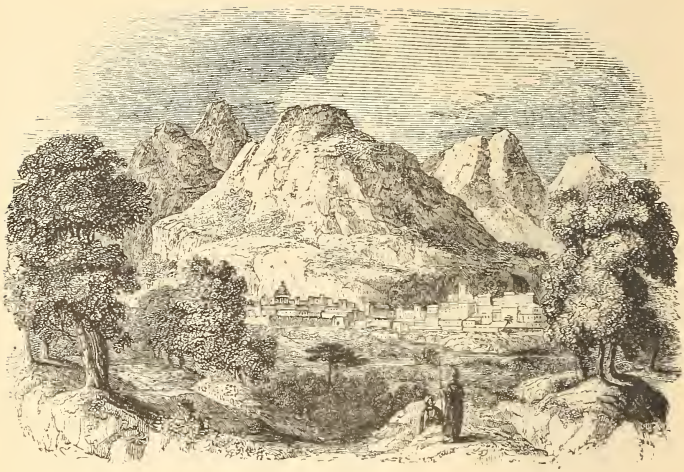
We have taken the names of the above tribes in the order which their relative situations, in the north, rendered the most convenient. The remainder we shall go through in the order in which the Scriptures enumerate them.

This brings us to the people called "the children of Heth" and the Hittites. They were settled in the southern hills about

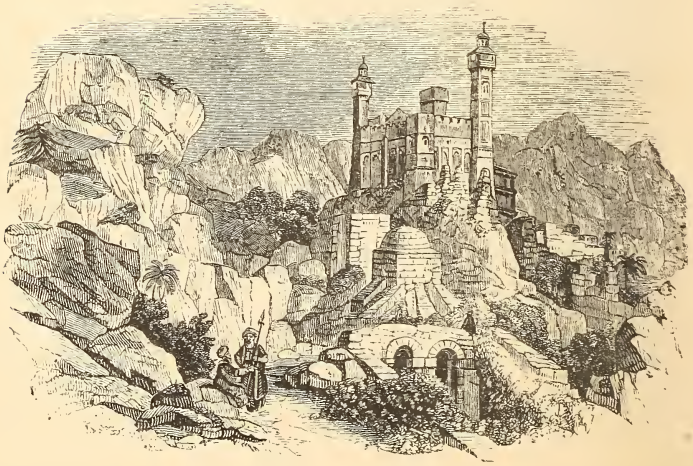
* Also Tartous, anciently Antaradus.

† Joseph. 'Antiq.' i. 6. 2. Strabo, 'Geog.,' v. 15. Pococke, ii. 27. Volney, ii. 148. Buckingham's 'Arab Tribes,' 523.

‡ A larger account of Hamah is given in 'The Pictorial Bible,' under Num. xiii. 21.



SHECHEM.



HEBRON.

Hebron and Beersheba. The Hebrew patriarchs had their encampments much in that part of the country, and appear to have lived on good terms with their Hittite neighbours, by whom they were treated with respect and consideration.

The Jebusites, who are more noted in later history than in that of the patriarchs, were seated among the hills to the north of those which the Hittites occupied. Their territory extended to and included the site of Jerusalem, of which, indeed, they appear to have been the founders; but whether before or after the date at which this history commences, we have no means of knowing. But, in a later day, we find them there in a city which they called Jebus, from which it was not until the time of David that they were entirely expelled. That they were able to maintain their post so long in the very heart of a country which the Israelites had subdued. warrants the conclusion that they formed one of the most powerful of the Canaanitish clans *.

The Amorites appear to have been the most powerful and widely spread of the Canaanitish nations. The prophet Amos poetically describes the strength and power of the Amorite, by telling us that his "height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks." It is, indeed, likely that here, as is certainly the case in other places, such as Gen. xv. 16, the Amorites are taken by a synecdoche of eminence for all the Canaanitish tribes; but by this fact their superior importance is just as strongly intimated. As this sometimes renders it doubtful whether the proper Amorites may be particularly intended or not, and as they were, moreover, of a remarkably encroaching disposition, it is not quite easy to fix their original seats with precision. It would seem, however, that they were first settled among the mountains to the west of the Dead Sea and of the southern part of the Jordan. While the Israelites were in Egypt, the Amorites crossed the Jordan, and, dispossessing the Moabites and Ammonites of the country between the rivers Jabbock and Arnon, established there an independent kingdom, which the ensuing history will bring conspicuously under our notice. The original seats of the tribe to the west of the Dead Sea and the Jordan were not, however, vacated, but the old and new settlements, separated by the river and the lake, do not appear to have had any dependence on each other. Indeed, it may be important to bear in mind that, in the early ages of which we speak, when the pressure of circumstances drove forth part of a tribe to seek new settlements, the *now* familiar idea of the necessary relations of dependence and subjection on the part of the offset towards the government of the original body, was one that never entered the minds of either. It was a discovery of later ages. This had its advantages; but it had the counterbalancing disadvantage, if it be one, that, seeing that the separation was in every way effectual, and that the emigrants had no right to look to the parent body for protection and support, they were obliged at the outset to be heedful that their own separate resources were adequate to the objects they had in view. Hence, emigrations by tribes or sections of tribes seeking new settlements were only made by large bodies of men, which contained in themselves every provision then thought necessary for independent existence, conquest, self-protection, and self-support. This cause and this effect acted reciprocally on each other, the effect reacting to perpetuate the cause by which it was produced. The strong and vigorous offsets, expecting no assistance and intending no subjection, took care to put themselves above the need of help; and that they did so, prevented the parent state from entertaining any notion that assistance might be called for, and, as a consequence, that subjection might be proper. This was the state of things at the beginning. Colonies had thus no infancy or adolescence, during which it was needful that they should lean upon the parent's supporting arm, till they grew to the full stature of a nation. Yet the several branches of the same family were not unmindful of one another. The relations of the several states springing from the same source, to each other, and to the parent state, appear in

* Gen. xv. 21; 2 Sam. v. 6; 1 Chron. xi. 4.

general to have been those of friendship and alliance, with a greater readiness to coalesce for common purposes than was usually shown among unrelated tribes.

This statement, though intended for larger application, is introduced here for the immediate purpose of showing how there came to be an independent Amoritish kingdom in the country beyond Jordan. It might even appear from Josh. v. 1, which speaks of "all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward," that there were several Amoritish monarchies west of the Jordan; but we rather incline to think that this is one of the passages in which the Amorites are named by a synecdoche of eminence for all the kingdoms not included among "the Canaanites which were by the sea" (the Phœnicians) which the context mentions. And yet we think there were several distinct little royalties among them; for if there were thirty-one kingdoms in so small a territory as Palestine, at the time of the conquest by the Hebrews, it seems unquestionable that several of them must have been in the hands of the Amorites, as they were certainly one of the most numerous and important of the families by which the country was originally peopled.

But, at the time of the Hebrew conquest, the Amorites had not only extended eastward beyond the Jordan, but westward towards the Mediterranean. The allotment of Dan, and the western portion of that of Ephraim, extended over the plains and valleys west of the central hills, and their western border approached as near to the sea as the previous occupation of the coast by a powerful people would allow. But we learn from a very instructive passage * that both the tribes had to contend for this portion of their domain with the Amorites. The Ephraimites, though the most successful, were not able to drive them out, as was their object, but were obliged to be content with making them tributary: but the Danites were entirely kept out of the plain by the Amorites, and obliged to confine themselves to the mountains, in consequence of which a body of them were ultimately compelled to seek out a remote settlement in a part of the country unappropriated by any kindred tribe.

We have been drawn into these anticipatory details by the desire of making the position of this important member of the Canaanitish family clearly understood. It will, however, be borne in mind that much of its relative importance was the growth of a later age than that at which this history commences. *Then* their place seems to have been among the hills bordering on the west the valley of the Jordan, which valley then included the vale of Siddim, afterwards the Asphaltic lake. Consequently their territory closely adjoined that of the children of Heth in one part,—so closely, indeed, that it is not easy to see whether Abraham when encamped at Mamre was a nearer neighbour to the Hittites or to the Amorites. Hebron was not quite a mile from Mamre, and was in the hands of the children of Heth; but Mamre itself was so called after a living Amorite chief of that name, who evidently abode there, or thereabout; for he, with his two brothers, Aner and Eshcol, were friends and confederates with Abraham, and joined him in his noted expedition in pursuit of the four kings who had carried Lot away captive. After this, it seems somewhat remarkable that the only hostile transaction (excepting the sad affair at Shechem) in which any of the Hebrew patriarchs appear to have been involved with the people of Canaan, was between Jacob and the Amorites. The circumstance is not historically recorded, nor would it have been known but for the allusion which the patriarch himself makes to it when bestowing his dying blessing upon his favourite son, Joseph, to whom he gives one portion above his brethren, which portion, he says, "I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."†

Of the Girgashites very little historical notice is taken: indeed we know little more of them than that their name occurs in the list of the nations by which the country was occupied. It is supposed that they were seated along the upper Jordan, and more

* Judges i. 34—36.

† Gen. xlviii. 22.

particularly upon the eastern borders of the lake of Gennesareth. This conclusion is founded chiefly on the fact that this district continued, even in the time of Christ, to bear the name of "the country of the Gergesenes." That we do not meet with them in history among the nations which warred against the Hebrews, the Jewish writers account for by telling us that they evaded the contest, as one from which they had no hope, and emigrated to Africa, where they ultimately settled in a country which from them took the name of Gurgestan.

The Hivites, also called the Avim, are said to have been originally settled in the advantageous district afterwards occupied by the Philistines; on their expulsion from which by that people, they were unable to obtain situations for the whole of their body, and therefore separated, one part of them settling to the north of the Jebusites, in what afterwards became the finest portion of Benjamin's lot, and where, on the return of the Israelites from Egypt, they were in possession of the "great city" of Gibeon, and other important towns. The other portion withdrew to the more vacant territory beyond Jordan, and established itself about Mount Hermon. Some think that the Hivites originally on the coast were wholly destroyed by the Philistines; and that these other settlements —the existence of which is undisputed—had been previously established, and remained undisturbed by that event. But the account which we have given seems to result more clearly from a comparison of the several texts which bear on the subject*.

We have now gone through the list of the families which are expressly described in the tenth chapter of Genesis, as being descended from Canaan, and as occupying the country which received his name. The list is very valuable, if only as enabling us to know, when the name of any clan occurs, whether or not it belonged to the common Canaanitish stock, or was derived from some other source, which knowledge sometimes throws a light upon the transactions in which we find them engaged.

* Deut. ii. 23; Josh. ix. 17; x. 2; xi. 3; xiii. 3.

The promise made to Abraham, that his descendants should possess the land in which he was a stranger, gave occasion for the introduction of another enumeration of the clans among whom the country was then divided†. This list differs in several respects from the former, and requires examination.

It *omits* the names of the Sidonians, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites, as does every other and later list; but, as we have already suggested, they are probably included under the name of Canaanites, which first occurs in the list we are now reviewing, as the name of a section of Canaan's descendants. The name of the Hivites also does not occur in this list; but we shall presently find an account for it.

The names in which this list coincides with the former are those of the Hittites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

The new names are those of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, besides that of the Canaanites, to which we have already alluded.

The Kenizzites not being mentioned in the list of those nations whom the Hebrews ultimately overcame at the Conquest, it is probable that in the interval they either migrated or were absorbed by some other tribe. Their situation is unknown, and the only inference which looks moderately probable is that which, from their being named between the Kenites and Kadmonites, supposes that they occupied some part of the country beyond Jordan. In that case, it is supposable that they were expelled or absorbed by the Midianites, Moabites, Ammonites, Amorites, or Bashanites, among whom the east country was found to be divided when the Hebrews arrived from Egypt.

As the Hivites are not noticed in this list, though their name occurs in others of later date, and we know historically of their continued existence as a people, it has been rather generally supposed that they are here denoted by the name of Kadmonites. The reason for this is, that the word Kadmonites means Easterlings, or people of the East

† Gen. xv. 19—21.

country; and we know that some of the Hivites were settled under Mount Hermon, in the north-east. But if we do not consider ourselves bound to account for the omission of the Hivites, and still lay stress upon the *signification* of the name of Kadmonites, it might seem quite as well to understand this as a general term for all the tribes then occupying, or rather living in, the country east of the Jordan. As none of these became of historical note, it might not seem needful to mention them more particularly—the less so as they were all superseded, and other nations, with whom we are made well acquainted, filled their place, at the time the Israelites arrived among them after their years of wandering in the desert. Indeed, from the facility with which Midian, Moab, Ammon, and others, were able to establish themselves "in the east country," it would seem to have been very thinly occupied in, and for some time after, the age of Abraham. The existence of few settled communities in it are intimated; and its chief inhabitants were doubtless the dwellers in tents, who must early have been attracted by the rich pastures which Gilead and Bashan offered to their herds and flocks.

The Perizzites are not named in the original list, in Gen. x. 15—18, of the families descended from Canaan: it is, however, generally concluded that they were real Canaanites, and that the name they bore is rather to be taken as characterizing their mode of life than as indicating their descent. But, even so, interpreters are not quite agreed as to the mode of life which the name of Perizzite indicates. Calmet *, influenced by an erroneous etymology of the word, which makes their name to denote a dispersed people, thinks that they were a pastoral people who traversed the land of Canaan with their flocks, without any fixed habitations. But in Hebrew the word *perazoth* denotes villages, or hamlets, in the open country, in opposition to walled towns; and hence Perizzite, when used otherwise than as a gentile name, describes a dweller in the open country, an inhabitant of such villages, that is, a peasant. Hence the reasonable enough conjecture of Wells † and others, that such of the Canaanites in general as lived not in well-frequented towns and cities, but in villages and hamlets about the country, were comprehended under the general name of Perizzites, that is, villagers or rustics, to whatever particular nation they belonged. The Sacred History notices their presence about Bethel (Gen. xiii. 7), in the northern part of what became the inheritance of Judah (Jud. i. 4, 5), and in the hilly woodlands of central Palestine (Josh. xi. 3; xvii. 15—18); but the incidental indications of history cannot be supposed to show *all* the localities of such a people. That they were a less polite and civilized people than those who dwelt in towns, is probable from the analogy of circumstances; but we abstain from introducing that peculiarly unfavourable character of them which, without any historical warrant, some writers have ventured to draw on the strength of that assumption.

There is happily no difficulty in finding the situation of the Rephaim in the time of Abraham, since we are expressly told (in Gen. xiv. 5) that they abode near Ashteroth Karnaim, or rather, perhaps, about the site on which that city afterwards stood. This was near the eastern border of that portion of the country beyond Jordan which afterwards fell to the lot of the half-tribe of Manasseh. "But," as old Fuller observes, "though here was their principal nest, we find some of their feathers scattered in other places." He alludes to "the valley of the Rephaim" near Jerusalem, through or by which the boundary-line between Judah and Benjamin in after-times passed; and to another in the tribe of Ephraim ‡. As, however, we do not find them in these situations till the time of Joshua, it is reasonable to infer that the clan, or some sections of it, had, intermediately, migrated thither from their original seats east of the Jordan.

The long list through which we have

* 'Hist. de l'Ancien Test.' tome i. 61.

† 'Geog. of the Old Test.' Pt. i. ch. 8. 51.

‡ Compare Josh. xv. 8; xvii. 15; and 2 Sam. v. 18. Our public translation, however, instead of preserving Rephaim as a gentile name, *translates* it into "giants"—"the valley of the giants"—"the land of the giants."

attended the reader has not yet exhausted the names of the clans seated in and on the borders of Palestine. A few names are added to the list of border-tribes in the brief account which is given, in Gen. xiv., of the expedition of Chedorlaomer and his allies. Happily the passage precludes uncertainty by specifying not only the names of the people, but the situations which they occupied. We are told that the invaders "smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Hivites in their Mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is in Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar." In this passage all the names, except those of the Rephaim and Amorites, are such as have not previously occurred.

In the preceding page the conjecture has been offered that the term Kadmonites, or "Easterlings," was probably used as a general name for all the tribes east of the river Jordan; and it may then be said that the names of the Rephaim, the Emim, and the Zuzim, were those of particular tribes comprehended under that general denomination. At all events it is certain that they were all seated in the country east of the Jordan.

As to the Rephaim, our previous statement shows that they were in the country which afterwards formed the kingdom of Og king of Bashan. With respect to the Emim, we have, in Deut. ii., very clear information. Moses, speaking to the Israelites while they were in the plains of Moab, before crossing the Jordan, and looking back to the times of which we now treat—times anterior to the existence of even the founder of the Moabites, says, "the Emim dwelt therein (in the land of Moab) in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim; which also were accounted giants, as the Anakim; but the Moabites call them Emim." From this it is clear that in the patriarchal times they dwelt in the country which the Hebrews found in the occupation of the Moabites when they marched through it on their way to the Jordan.

The Jewish writers, with the greatest probability, conclude that the Zuzim of Gen. xiv. are the same as the Zamzummim of Deut. ii. From the mention of them in the latter chapter, they appear to have been a very similar people to the Emim. Speaking of the land occupied by the descendants of Ammon, the brother of Moab, Moses observes, on the same occasion as that which supplies the former statement, "That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummim; a people great, and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them and dwelt in their stead." This information concerning the Emim and Zuzim is very clear, and needs no elucidation; and as they are not again mentioned in the patriarchal history, and were destroyed before the Hebrews arrived from Egypt, we shall not have any future occasion to notice them, unless in connexion with some inquiry concerning giants, which the progress of this work will render necessary. At present it is only requisite to direct the attention of the reader to the fact that there is no force or meaning in the plainest and most literal language, if the passages which we have cited do not state that there were some gigantic races among the early generations of men. Here and elsewhere, however, we are informed of their destruction or gradual extinction; so that, of "the races of the giants," only a few individuals, and they of one family, appear to have remained to the time of David. But we must not anticipate an inquiry reserved for a future page.

The history of the Horites in Seir is very similar to that of the people of whom we have just spoken. They occupied the mountains of Seir in the time of Abraham, but were ultimately dispossessed by the descendants of his own grandson, Esau, the father of the Edomites, who will, hereafter, often come historically under our notice. This information we also obtain from Deut. ii., where we are told that the Lord destroyed the Horites before the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir; and they "succeeded them" and "dwelt in their stead." A slight

variation in the phraseology of this statement, as compared with the others, intimates that when the Edomites extirpated the Horites, they had previously dwelt among them: and, correspondingly, we find that Esau had established himself, as a powerful chieftain in Seir, by the time that Jacob returned from Mesopotamia; and the further information, now given, intimates that, when his posterity and retainers felt themselves strong enough, they rose against the old inhabitants, overthrew them, and established their own sovereignty over the mountains. It seems possible to collect from the remarkable but obscure details in Gen. xxxvi., that the Edomites lived in a part of Mount Seir in independence, under a government of their own, for some time before they were able to establish their dominion over all the mountains; or, in other words, there seems clear intimation that the Edomites and Horites divided the possession of Seir between them until the former became strong enough to add the portion of the Horites to their own, reducing the whole to their single dominion. It is also a very singular circumstance that the chapter to which we refer gives an account, not only of the posterity of Edom, but of that of "Seir the Horite:" from which last phrase it would seem that Seir, from whom the mountains generally took their names, was no other than a very eminent man among the descendants of Hor. It is a very striking instance of the tenacity with which the most ancient names cling to the sites on which they were originally imposed, that, while the names of Esau and his descendants cannot be recognised in those which any of the sites and conspicuous points in these mountains bear, the older names of Hor and of Seir himself are well preserved to this day. Now, as in the time of the patriarchs, the range, or a most important part of it, bears the name of Mount Seir, in the softened form of Mount Shera, and now, as in the time of Moses, the most conspicuous summit—that on which Aaron died—bears the name of Mount Hor. A thousand similar instances occur, in which the new or repeatedly altered names, imposed by successive conquerors and overthrowers, are quite forgotten, and the venerable old patriarchal names, which the first inhabitants of the earth bestowed, are alone remembered by the people of the land.

The mention of the Amalekites in the account of Chedorlaomer's expedition would not, to the general reader, appear to suggest any difficulty. But a difficulty has arisen from the incompatibility of this fact with the received opinion concerning the origin of the Amalekites. No *person* of the name of Amalek is mentioned in Scripture save a *grandson* of Esau*; and *therefore* it has been concluded that this Amalek was the founder of the Amalekites; and the difficulty which is offered to this conclusion by the fact that the Amalekites are mentioned as a people many years before even Esau, the grandfather of this Amalek, was born, is got over by the convenient conjecture that the Amalekites are mentioned proleptically in the time of Abraham, and that "the country of the Amalekites" means no more than the country which the Amalekites ultimately occupied. To such a hypothesis we should not at all object, if we saw any real necessity for it; that is, if some fact or circumstance mentioned in history could not be understood without such an explanation. But this is very far from being the case in the present instance. Here we have a simple historical fact recorded, and there we have a conjecture founded on the mere occurrence of a name; and that the fact should give place to the conjecture, instead of the conjecture being held untenable, because incompatible with the fact, is a course which appears to require much stronger reasons than any which can be adduced in the present instance. Indeed, were the alternatives opposing facts, instead of conjecture opposed to fact, the collateral evidence which must decide between equally balanced alternatives seems far more in favour of the earlier origin of the Amalekites than of their descent from Esau, and renders it a far more reasonable conclusion that Esau's grandson was named after the founder of a neighbouring people, already powerful, than that he was himself the progenitor of a nation so proverbially powerful as the

* Gen. xxxvi. 12.

Amalekites were at the time that the Israelites departed from Egypt. As this people make a considerable figure in the following history, it has seemed proper to make these observations on their origin. Such particulars as are known of their history will transpire in the course of the historical narrative. And it is only necessary to add in this place that the territory which they overspread appears to have extended from the heart of the Sinai peninsula northward, along the borders of the desert towards the southern frontier of Palestine.

In the early history of Palestine there is no people, after the Hebrews, who come more frequently under our notice, and in whose proceedings we take greater interest, than the Philistines. Their importance is indicated by the simple fact that the country derived from this people the name of PALESTINE, which it had acquired as early as the departure of Israel from Egypt. In the notice of the Hivites it has been already shown that the Philistines were not one of the original nations of Canaan, but they obtained a settlement there by the expulsion of the Hivites. Their *previous* history has been a subject of much discussion, and offers a matter of curious inquiry, to which we shall not be inattentive; but we find that a subsequent page will afford a more suitable opportunity than the present for the introduction of the observations which a careful examination of the subject may enable us to offer; and what we may then state will become much clearer to the reader through various particulars which the course of the narrative will intermediately require us to produce.

NOTE ON CHRONOLOGY.

Some of the dates given in the text will not fail to strike the reader as very different from those to which he is most accustomed, as occurring in the margin of our Bibles. They are derived from Dr. Hales. As this computation adds no less than 1407 years to the age of the world, and as it involves the necessity of considerable trouble in its application to historical uses, it will easily be believed that we have only determined to adopt it after very anxious consideration and strict examination of the evidence on which it stands.

But although it is now first adopted formally in a regular history, such of our readers as have paid the least attention to the subject will not regard it as a very startling innovation. The question between the shorter and longer chronologies has been so often and so largely discussed, and the evidence in favour of the longer has acquired such strength, and has, lastly, been so clearly set forth by Dr. Hales, that only the disposition to acquiesce in that which has received the sanction of time and of general use, together with the labour which the alteration involves, can adequately account for the retention of the shorter system by historical writers, some of whom have, indeed, not retained it without recording their convictions in favour of the computation which, in practice, they were too indolent or too timid to adopt. Its historical adoption now, in a work of this nature, does not require much courage, nor can be regarded as a measure of doubtful propriety: for we believe the time is fully come, in which no writer need be anxious for anything more than the solid truth of that opinion or system to which he declares his adherence. And for the present question in particular, it is so far fortunate, that no point of faith is involved in the shorter chronology, and that those who have disputed its claims and advocated its rejection, have all been, to a man, persons of eminent orthodoxy. This is particularly the case with the distinguished chronologer and eminent scholar by whom the claims of the longer system have been elucidated beyond all possibility of future observation; and those whom some fanciful and suspicious speculations of Dr. Hales may have induced to examine his chronological principles more guardedly than they might otherwise have deemed necessary, will feel proportionate satisfaction in rising from the inquiry with the most entire conviction that his conclusions with respect to the Scriptural chronology, have been founded on a rock, and can never be overthrown. To ourselves it will be a

particular satisfaction, if our adoption of the larger computation helps in any degree to bring it into more general use, seeing that there are few studious men who do not now accept its guidance in their private historical or chronological researches.

As there will probably be among our readers some who have but little acquaintance with this really important subject, a slight explanation may be considered necessary.

Our information concerning the age of the world, and of the interval between the different great epochs in its history, is necessarily derived, in the earlier portions, entirely from the materials which the Scriptures supply. The first information is supplied by genealogies, which ascend as high as the first man. They tell us at what age he begat a son, how long after he survived, and the number of years he lived: the same information is supplied concerning his son, and so on through many generations. By adding these particulars together, we have a clear and unquestionable estimate of the whole duration of time over which they extend; and as we know the ages of particular persons, we also know the date of such events as are said to have occurred in some particular year of their lives. Information of this kind comes down to the more proper historical data, in which we compute time by adding together the particulars which inform us, successively, of the durations of captivities, wanderings, reigns, and governments. If, in the same time, genealogies occur, and the intervals between two great events happen to be specified, these are valuable materials whereby to test or corroborate the deductions from historical data. It is by this process that the duration of the interval between the creation and the birth of Christ, and the respective dates of the various events which that grand interval embraces, have been determined.

The process is clear enough, but not so its particular applications and developments. We are, undoubtedly, to follow implicitly the Sacred Scriptures; but the difficulty is in ascertaining what the Scriptures really do state, and in collecting and combining the information which they intend to convey.

At the outset there is this great difficulty, that the present Masorete copies of the Hebrew Scriptures differ very greatly from the Septuagint and from Josephus. The Samaritan Pentateuch differs from the Hebrew in some important particulars; its estimate of the antediluvian generations is shorter than even that of the Hebrew; and, although its estimate of the postdiluvian is higher, the resulting effect leaves it with the Hebrew as affording an estimate more than 1000 years less than that which the Septuagint and Josephus require. The two latter do not exactly coincide, but they approach so nearly, and so it is easy to detect and remove the cause of difference, that their testimony may be regarded as one. But to explain all this the more clearly, we must give the reader some idea of the discrepancies and analogies of the various computations, before that period at which they came to an agreement. This is best done by stating the intervals which they respectively place between certain marked epochs. We have included the computation of Archbishop Usher, founded on the Hebrew text, as his account is that which is most generally received, and has been adopted in our Bibles.

	Hebrew: Vulgar Account.			Hebrew: Usher's Account.			Samaritan.			Septuagint: Alexandrine.			Josephus, as corrected by Hales.		
	A.M.	B.C.	Interval.	A.M.	B.C.	Interval.	A.M.	B.C.	Interval.	A.M.	B.C.	Interval.	A.M.	B.C.	Interval.
Creation . . .	1	3760	—	1	4004	—	1	4305	—	1	5508	—	1	5411	—
Deluge	1656	2104	1656	1656	2348	1656	1307	2998	1307	2262	3246	2262	2256	3155	2256
Call of Abraham	2018	1742	362	2083	1922	426	2384	1921	1077	3469	2039	1207	3318	2093	1062
Exode	2448	1312	430	2513	1491	430	2814	1491	430	3894	1614	425	3764	1648	445
Solomon's Temple founded .	2928	832	480	2992	1012	480	3294	1011	480	4495	1013	601	4184	1027	621
Solomon's Temple destroyed .	3338	422	410	3396	588	424	3718	587	424	4919	589	424	4825	586	441
Birth of Christ .	3760	—	422	4004	—	588	4305	—	587	5508	—	589	5411	—	586

In this table the Samaritan and Septuagint accounts are extracted from tables in the valuable Preface to the Ancient Universal History, and the others are derived from Hales, with the addition of the "intervals." The materials for comparison which the table offers are well worthy of consideration. It will be seen that the Samaritan makes a much nearer general approximation to the Hebrew than to the Septuagint or Josephus; it makes a much shorter estimate of the interval between the creation and the deluge than any of even the Hebrew accounts; but, on the other hand, it gives a computation of the interval between the deluge and the call of Abraham so much longer than that of the Hebrew, as very nearly approximates to the generally longer reckoning of the Septuagint and Josephus. It is important to observe that the Hebrew stands alone in its brief estimate of this most important period. The astonishing difference of 1748 years between the highest and lowest accounts, contained in the Table, of the era of the creation, will appear a very strong discrepancy; yet these are by no means the extreme points at which that era has been estimated. Alphonso, King of Castile, reckons the date of the creation at 6984 B.C., and Rabbi Lippman computes it at 3616 B.C., the difference being 3370 years!

The reader will already have discovered that those who follow the Hebrew text, as it now stands, are not at all agreed in the computations which they found upon it. The lowest estimate from this source has just been given; the highest is that of the Seder Olam Sutha, or 'Small Chronicle of the World,' published about A.D. 1121, which dates the creation B.C. 4359.

Now, taking the Hebrew and the Septuagint as the representatives, respectively, of the shorter and longer estimates, it is quite evident that one of them must have been corrupted. It is also clear that this corruption took place, not only after the birth of Christ, but after Jerusalem was destroyed; for Josephus clearly testifies that when he wrote, towards the end of the first century, the Hebrew and the Septuagint were in perfect chronological accordance; and, at a somewhat earlier date, Philo gave his valuable evidence to the same effect. The motive by which such a corruption may have been induced is easily found. The Jews had a cherished tradition that the Messiah was to appear about the middle of the sixth millenary age of the world; at that time Christ did, in fact, appear, according to the longer chronology, and that this, their own tradition, was alleged against them by the early Christians, supplied a motive for the Jews to tamper with the Scriptural genealogies, whereby they might contend that he appeared much *before* the expected time, and show that they still had ground for expecting the Messiah. That the Jews had this tradition we know; and we also know that their writers have often availed themselves of this argument, founded on the present state of the Hebrew text. That, in their bitter enmity to Christ, they would not much scruple at such a proceeding, we can learn from contemporary authorities (Justin Martyr, for instance), who distinctly charge them with altering or erasing passages in their Scriptures which the Christians were in the habit of adducing to prove that Christ was the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

If, then, the Jews desired to alter the genealogies, it was much easier for them to do so in the Hebrew than in the Septuagint. The copies of the former had become scarce during the wars, and the comparatively few remaining copies belonged to the synagogues or were in the hands of learned Jews, the Hebrew of the Bible being then a dead language; whereas the Septuagint being in a living language, extensively understood, the copies were numerous, a great number of them in the hands of Christians, and many, probably, even in the libraries of the curiously-learned heathen. The Jews could hardly at that time falsify the Septuagint, but they could the Hebrew, and then appeal to its superior authority to throw discredit on the Septuagint. And that this was actually done appears from the statement of Eusebius, that, even so late as his time, the longer chronology had not wholly disappeared from the Hebrew Bibles; some of which then had the shorter and others the longer account, agreeing with the Septuagint. The Hebrew text, as it now stands, also offers not a few internal evidences of alteration, some very conclusive instances of which Dr. Hales has pointed out.

But it may further be shown that the Hebrew chronology is irreconcilable with probability and fact. Eusebius well remarks, "The error of the Jewish Hebrew text is evident from this,—that it makes Abraham and Noah contemporaries, which is inconsistent with all history: for since, according to the Hebrew text, there were not more than 292 years from the flood to the birth of Abraham, and since, according to

the same text, Noah survived the flood 350 years, it follows that he lived to the 58th year of Abraham."

To this judicious remark Hales adds:—

"Upon this supposition, idolatry must have begun and prevailed, and the patriarchal government have been overthrown by Nimrod and the builders of Babel, during the lifetime of the second founder of the human race, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet.

"If Shem lived until the 110th year of Isaac and the 50th year of Jacob, why was not he included in the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham and his family?—or why is he utterly unnoticed in their history?

"How could the earth be so populous in Abraham's days, or how could the kingdoms of Assyria, Egypt, &c., be established so soon after the deluge?" This last difficulty was strongly felt by Sir Walter Raleigh, who, in his 'History of the World,' remarks, "In this patriarch's time all the then parts of the world were peopled; all nations and countries had their kings; Egypt had many magnificent cities, and so had Palestine, and all the neighbouring countries; yea, all that part of the world besides, as far as India: and these, not built with sticks, but of hewn stone and with ramparts; which magnificence needed a parent of more antiquity than those other men have supposed." In another place he forcibly observes, "If we advisedly consider the state and countenance of the world, such as it was in Abraham's time, yea, before his birth, we shall find it were very ill done, by following opinion without the guide of reason, to pare the times over-deeply between the flood and Abraham; because in cutting them too near the quick, the reputation of the whole story might perchance bleed." And it has bled. The sagacity of this accomplished man did not erroneously anticipate that "the scorners" would not fail to detect and make the most of the great and serious difficulties which the shorter chronology creates, but which by the longer computation are wholly obviated.

After all this, we trust that it will be felt that we have done well, and taken a safe course, in adopting the longer account for the present work; and we do not regret that the explanation which thus became necessary has afforded an opportunity of bringing so important a subject under the notice of many whose attention may not hitherto have been directed towards it.

It only remains to state why the reckoning of Josephus in particular has been chosen.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the account of that great historian is not a system of his own, but a statement of the interpretation, received in his time, of the account which the Scriptures gave. The Scripture is still the authority; and Josephus is the witness of the testimony which it bore before any disagreement on the subject existed, and when the accounts of the Hebrew and the Septuagint synchronized. The system is that of the Bible, and Josephus becomes the agent through which its uncorrupted statements may be recovered. His particulars evince great skill in reconciling *apparent* discrepancies, and in eliciting that which, when clearly stated, appears at once to be the sense which the Scriptures convey, and which is in perfect agreement with every fact and circumstance which it records. Besides this, he gives sums and results collected from the Scriptures; and how important such materials are as tests, and as means of comparison and verification, no one who has given the least attention to such subjects needs be told. It is true that his numbers also have been much corrupted, in order to bring them into agreement with the Hebrew account; but, happily, enough of sums and dates escaped the general spoliation, to afford materials for the detection of the alterations, and the restoration of the original numbers. In some cases, where the sum had been altered, the particulars sufficed to render the alteration manifest; but more generally a number of sums which, having been stated incidentally, had escaped the general havoc, evinced the alteration of the details, and at the same time offered a firm basis for the restoration of the original edifice, which had been disfigured in some parts, and demolished in others, to the grievous injury of the builder's reputation. The beautifully connected chain of analytical and synthetical argument, by which Dr. Hales has effected this restoration, may, as one of the finest pieces of reasoning we possess, be recommended to the admiration even of those who feel but little interest in the subject to which it refers.

[Bedouin Encampment.]

CHAPTER II.

ABRAHAM.

At the time which we have already indicated, the postdiluvian fathers had long been dead. While they lived, and while the flood and its causes were still fresh in the memories of men, the knowledge of the one true God appears to have remained clear, and uncorrupted by the devices of the imagination. The wild undertaking at Babel was a strong act of human madness and of daring pride; but, although it proceeded on most mistaken notions of the character and power of God, there is no indication that any measure of idolatry was involved in that strange deed. The ensuing confusion of tongues may have tended, in its ultimate effects—by obstructing communications between the several tribes of men—to obscure the knowledge of the facts and doctrines which Noah and his sons had transmitted from the times before the flood. It could have had no immediate and direct effect; but it is easy to see that in time it must have put the several tribes in a better condition for *forgetting* that knowledge which had ceased to be the common property of one language. Judging from the slight indications which the Scriptures offer, as well as from the analogous facts which it records, it would seem that the principles of social and moral conduct were corrupted much sooner than the abstract belief in the unity and providence of God: but the former corruption, doubtless, hastened the latter, it being not more true that "a reprobate mind" results from the dislike of men "to retain God in their knowledge," than that the pre-existence of the reprobate mind produces that dislike.

It is rather remarkable that the same country which witnessed the mad speculation of the builders at Babel and the primitive tyranny of Nimrod, is also that in which the first corruptions of religious opinion appear to have arisen. When the early inhabitants of Chaldea beheld, in their most beautiful sky, "the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in brightness," their hearts were "secretly enticed" to render to the creature the worship and honour due only to the Creator. This is the testimony of all antiquity, which mentions no idolatrous worship

as of earlier date than that of Chaldea. And this is also, indirectly, the testimony of Scripture. In all the history of Abraham there is not the least intimation of the existence of idolatry or any idolatrous usage among any of the various peoples in whose territories he sojourned. It is clearly intimated of some of them that they worshipped JEHOVAH, and it is implied of others in the manner in which they mention his name: but that idolatry was practised in Chaldea before Abraham departed to the land of Canaan, and even that Abraham's family, if not himself, participated in that idolatry, is clearly stated by Joshua in his charge to the Israelites, when he says to them, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [Euphrates] in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: *and they served other gods.*" (xxiv. 2.) This settles the question as to Terah himself; and the Jews have a tradition which, as usual, *improves* considerably upon the scriptural intimation, by stating that Terah was not only an idolater, but an idolatrous priest, and a maker of idols. This conclusion appears to have been founded on the impression that the *teraphim*, the earliest manufactured objects of superstition mentioned in Scripture, took their name from Terah; a conjecture that has seemed the more probable from the fact, that the teraphim are first brought under our notice as being in the possession of that branch of Terah's descendants which remained in Mesopotamia. But it is enough to know that before the time of Abraham, or, at least, in his early years, "other gods" than Jehovah were served beyond the great river, and that the family of Abraham concurred in that service. But that *idol* worship, in the restricted sense, as meaning the worship of images, was then known, is not very probable, and is, at least, incapable of proof. Men do not suddenly fall into so low a deep as this. The sun, the moon, the host of heaven, were the first of those "other gods" which attracted their admiration, secretly enticed their hearts, and, first, divided, and, in the end, entirely engrossed their reverence. To *images* they had not yet descended; or, if they had "teraphim," it may be well doubted that these were idols for worship, in the usual sense of the expression.

It may also be questioned whether, at this time, even the servers of other gods beyond the Euphrates had altogether ceased to serve, according to their own views, the God of their fathers. The first steps from good to bad are, not to reject the good, but to join that which is bad unto it. To forget God, and formally to deny him, were impossible as first acts of corruption. The first act of the mistaken mind was, doubtless, after the knowledge of his character and attributes had become faint, to regard him, not as a God at hand, but as a God afar off —removed too far from them by the ineffable sublimity of his essence, to be reasonably expected to concern himself in the small affairs of this world and its people. Yet, feeling that the world needed that government which they deemed HIM too high to exercise, they imagined that, far below him, but far above themselves, there might be agents by whom the government of the universe was administered, and to whom even man might make the smallest of his wants and his humblest desires known without presumption. Seeking these agents, they looked first upon the sun,

> "——— that, with surpassing glory crown'd,
> Look'd from his sole dominion, like the god
> Of this new world,"

and deeming that they had found in him the chief of the agents which they sought, he became the object of their admiring reverence. To the sun was added the moon, and, in time, the principal of the stars; and he who has considered well the human heart, can readily conceive that the originators of this intermediate worship may have imagined that they did God service, that it magnified his greatness, and showed a humbling sense of their own insignificance before him, when they intrusted to inferior hands the interests which they held to be much below his attention, and withdrew themselves afar off from the effulgence of his presence. But under such a system, or under any system which takes from the Almighty the govern-

ment of the world, the honour due to him must need sink before long into a simple recognition of his existence; and even this truth must in the end fade from the general mind, and exist only as a cold speculative dogma, known only to the higher theologians,—a secret, whispered, in mystery and fear, to the chosen few, in groves, and caverns, and solitary places. All true and living worship can only come from the heart which is moved by love, hope, gratitude, or fear, and can only be rendered to one from whose beneficence blessings are hoped or have been received, or from whose anger evils are feared; and to make the Almighty other than this, under whatever self-deluding pretence of enhancing his glory, was really to render his sovereignty barren and nominal, and, as far as man might, to depose him from his kingly throne—the heart of man—and take his glory from him. Therefore God, knowing this inevitable result, at all times rejected with indignation the agents or helpers to whom men were willing to ascribe some part of that honour which he only could claim. Hence, the grand interdiction on this subject, which he gave in later days to the house of Israel, struck at the beginnings of the evil. It said not, "Thou shalt have no other god *instead of* me;" but, "Thou shalt have none other gods before (or *with*, or *besides*) me."

The worship of other gods having thus been established, God, foreknowing that it would overspread the earth, in such sort that he would be almost forgotten among the race which owed to him the breath of life, delayed not to take such measures as seemed best to his wisdom, to preserve his testimony among the nations until the arrival of that "time of refreshing" which he had predetermined, and the coming of which he made known with increasing distinctness as its date approached. To this end he determined to make one nation the steward of those great truths which were to become mysteries to the world at large—his unity, his supremacy, his providence—and to whom the hope of a future great deliverer might be committed. His unity he would impress upon them by repeated declarations, and by the abhorrent rejection and punishment of all attempts to associate other gods with him: his supremacy, by the overthrow of idolaters and their idols, and by the demonstration that the powers of nature were the creatures of his will; and his providence—his universal rule, for which nothing is too high, and from which nothing is exempt—at first, by occasional appearances, and, at last, by abiding manifestations of his presence among them. Thus to keep ever before them the truth that he was a God at hand and not a God afar off, and to compel them to remember, not only that "he is, but that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him," he would constitute himself the Legislator and King of this peculiar people—as a Legislator, he would give them a code of laws which should keep them apart from all other nations till the object was accomplished; and while, as a King, he directed all public measures, and rewarded public virtue and punished public guilt, he would make it manifest that his care extended to the meanest of his subjects, and that, while he dwelt among them in his high and holy place, he was not less present with the man of humble and contrite spirit.

To accomplish these objects, the Almighty did not see fit to make choice of any existing nation; but to give a nation existence, and to watch over it from its birth, subjecting its infancy to his guidance and instruction, and forming its character and condition with a view to the great final objects of its being.

Separately from these considerations, the history of this peculiar people cannot well be understood. To write their history is one chief part of the duty we have undertaken; and that history is first the history of one man, then of a family, and then of a nation.

In the district of northern Mesopotamia which is called in Scripture "Ur of the Chaldees," being apparently the large and fertile plain of Osroene, dwelt a wealthy pastoral family, descended, in the line of Heber, from Shem the son of Noah. The living head of this family was that Terah

whom we have already found occasion to name. This man had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram. Of these sons the last-named was the youngest, having been borne by Terah's second wife, fully sixty years later than Haran his elder brother. Haran died prematurely in the land of his nativity, leaving one son named Lot, and two daughters called Milcah and Sarai. According to the custom of those times, the two surviving sons of Terah married the daughters of their dead brother; Milcah becoming the wife of Nahor, and Sarai being married to Abram.

Abram, the youngest son of this family, is the person—the one man—with whom the history of the Hebrew people commences; for on him the Almighty saw proper to confer the high distinction of setting himself and his future race apart among the nations, in fulfilment of the great object which we have already indicated.

The fame which this appointment has brought upon the name of this great patriarch has produced much anxious inquiry into that part of his history which transpired before our more authentic and undoubted records introduce him to our knowledge, which is not until he was sixty years of age. The traditions of the Jews and Arabians speak much of his early life; but our certain information offers only the few facts of parentage and connection which we have just supplied.

It thus also occurs, in many other cases, that such traditions supply much information which the Scriptures do not offer; and it then becomes an anxious question to the historian, how far they may be accepted as materials for history. That they are not to be wholly disregarded, may be inferred from the circumstance that the Scripture does itself sometimes make allusions to facts, concerning persons and events of former ages, which the Scriptural accounts of them do not preserve, while yet these facts are alluded to as matters of current knowledge. It is, however, the peculiar felicity of a historian of the Jews, that he has for the basis of his narrative materials of unquestioned truth, which it is not needful for him to test, but only to understand. He is thus furnished with an unerring standard of historical verity, by which his information from other sources may be tested. That the information offered by the Jewish and other Oriental authorities is not to be found in the Bible, does not necessarily prove it to be untrue. It was not the object of the sacred writers to relate every historical event, or every circumstance of the events which they do relate, and still less every incident in the lives of those persons of whom they speak; and that there existed among the Jews not only oral traditions but written documents of ancient date, containing particulars which the sacred narratives do not afford, appears very clearly, not only from the express references which the Scripture writers make to such documents as supplying further information, but from the incidental allusions —as to things well known to the Hebrew nation—to events and circumstances of which the historical narratives of Scripture give no account, and which are often of such ancient date, at the time allusion is thus made to them, as to show that they could only then have existed in the knowledge of the people through oral traditions or written documents. The truth of the accounts which they afford is substantiated, in the particular instances, by the allusions thus made by the sacred writers to them, and which also reflect a high degree of respectability upon the source from which they were derived.

If these documents and traditions had been preserved in their original forms, they would rank on the same level with the first-rate materials of general history; but, considering the superior and peculiar authority of the sacred narrative, only as second-rate materials in a history of the Jews. But they have long been lost; although, probably, a considerable number of those details, which the sacred historians did not find it necessary to embody in their compendious accounts, are preserved in the history by Josephus, and possibly a large proportion of them may exist, mixed with and disguised by enormous absurdities and matters of no value, in the traditions pre-

served in writing by the Jews and the Arabians. It may be well to remember, that many accounts which come before us, as oral traditions committed to writing, must be regarded as having been originally derived from written documents, after the loss of which many of them survived as oral statements; and in this state they certainly received many disguising exaggerations, additions, and dislocations, before they were ultimately recommitted to writing in the very repulsive form in which they now come before us. This is not, indeed, the account which the Jews themselves give; for they allege that all their traditions were originally oral, and never existed in writing until they were put into the form in which they now appear. This may willingly be conceded of the mass of them, which are many degrees worse than useless; but to those who are disposed to carefully consider the subject, it will manifestly appear that they may be expected to contain a portion of the facts transmitted from those older and more authentic sources from which the Scriptural writers appear to have drawn their accounts, and to which they distinctly refer those who desire more extensive information. We know, on the authority of Scripture, that some part at least of this more ancient information existed in writing; but, as we are not sure that some of the allusions in Scripture may not be to facts contained in those oral traditions, it may be expedient to remind the reader that, from a variety of circumstances, the difference between oral tradition and written statement, as historical authority, is far less important in the east than in Europe; and, even in the east, was far less important anciently than now. On these grounds we should be disposed to consider even oral ancient tradition as not necessarily excluded from historical notice, and, although we should scarcely be inclined to assign it a tithe of that pre-eminent value which the Jews claim for it, we shall sometimes consider it our duty to explore this class of materials, in the hope of finding a few of those further details which may have existed in the old documents or traditions to which the sacred writers occasionally refer. The mass of these statements, as they now stand, are so suspicious, that it will, in most cases, be necessary, in the first instance, to presume that even the most plausible and needful of them are untrue, until, after a careful examination, the facts which they offer appear to be not only not contradictory to the standard narrative, but, while in themselves desirable for the completion or elucidation of the biblical accounts, are in circumstantial agreement with the facts which those accounts record, and are in no wise opposed in spirit to them. Even the statements which, after having been already sifted by Josephus, are admitted by him into his narrative, must be subjected to the same process. And when we are privileged to possess one standard narrative in which implicit confidence may be placed, the common rules of historical criticism leave it far from difficult to estimate the value of the other reports which come before us; and this is easier still, when the agreement or disagreement of these reports with the spirit and manners of the age to which they refer becomes another element of our consideration.

We have a very general suspicion of all the traditionary history which applies to the age of the patriarchs, whether we find it in Josephus, in the Rabbins, or in the Arabian historians. But, subject to this reservation, it may be desirable, for the information of the reader, sometimes to state the particulars which they offer, if only to mark the contrast between their injudicious elaborations and the simple and unaffected truth of the standard narrative.

Most of the traditions which refer to the early life of Abram, turn upon the religion of his family. All we know from Scripture on this subject is, that Terah served other gods beyond the Euphrates, and there is not much reason to doubt but that Abram and the other members of Terah's family were brought up in the same service. That, as some allege, Abram stood alone as the sole worshipper of the true God, among an idolatrous people, and in a family of idolaters, and that *therefore* he became the special

object of the Divine choice and favour, does not appear to us a very probable or a very necessary explanation. It is enough, and it is far more probable, that he felt unsatisfied with the things which he had been taught, and with the practices which were followed —that he had an inquiring mind, and sought after the true God, if haply he might find him; and we know that when he had found him, he manifested his satisfaction and joy by the most implicit and memorable obedience to every dictate of "the heavenly vision."

The Jewish traditions undertake to decide the question whether image worship had commenced at this early date, by assuring us that Terah was himself a maker of images. And they proceed to inform us that, when God had enlightened Abram's mind, he took an opportunity of burning and destroying all the idols in his father's house; and, it is added, that Haran attempted to snatch the idols of his father from the fire, but was himself surprised by the flames, and perished with his gods. They thus account for the premature death of Haran, which the Scriptures only notice without explaining.

We are further told that for this act Abram was accused before Nimrod, and was condemned to be burnt; but that his Divine Protector miraculously withdrew him from the flames. These traditions are told with some variations; but are in substance very ancient, and to this day are articles of firm belief among the Jews, Christians, and Moslems of the East. The word *Ur* means, in the Hebrew, *Fire*, and it is alleged that this last incident in the history of Abram is indicated in that passage of Scripture which tells us that God brought forth Abram from Ur (or the Fire) of the Chaldees.

The excellent historian of the Jews, Josephus, could not but be well acquainted with all the current traditionary legends concerning their renowned forefather; but, although belonging to a sect (the Pharisees) which cherished "the traditions of the elders" with unusual zeal, he in general makes but a very guarded use of them; and in *his* history of Abram omits all the particulars which we have now stated. But in this instance, at least, the omission appears to have been rather from prudential considerations than from actual disbelief; for it is not difficult to discover the very traditions which he allowed to influence his view of the religious character of the patriarch. He very properly omits any notice of image worship; but tells us that the people of Abram's native country were worshippers of the heavenly bodies, and possessed much knowledge of astronomy, with which science he intimates that Abram himself was well acquainted. He tells us that the patriarch was of a most sagacious and superior mind, and possessed an eloquence the most persuasive. He had obtained, and endeavoured to give to others, a much purer idea of God than in his time prevailed; and he was the first to teach that the sun, the moon, and the host of heaven had no power of themselves, but were subject to a superior power by which their movements were regulated. The Chaldeans and other inhabitants of Mesopotamia would not hear this doctrine; and, when they raised a tumult against the preacher of it, he deemed it proper to leave the country, and by the command, and through the assistance of God, he went to sojourn in the land of Canaan*.

This account contains nothing, that we can perceive, contrary to Scripture, though it offers information which Scripture does not contain. Nothing in it is more remarkable than the complete omission of all mention of Nimrod, who figures so conspicuously in all the Rabbinical and Oriental accounts of the patriarch, and whose presence would alone suffice to nullify them all: for, according to the just view of Scripture chronology which the historian took, Nimrod could not well have been the contemporary of Abram, but, according to ordinary circumstances, must have been dead long before his birth.

The Arabian traditions of Abram's early life do, in some of their details, conform very strikingly to the view which we have taken of his religious character; and, although replete with preposterous incidents,

* 'Antiq.' lib. i. c. 6.

and unentitled to historical notice, are curious and characteristic in themselves, and are also interesting as showing the notions which a large division of the human race entertain concerning the early life of the great patriarch whose memory the Moslem unites with the Christian and the Jew to cherish.

All these stories and traditions concur in intimating that Abram had, in his own country, brought enmity and opposition upon himself, by the open expression of opinions contrary to the corruptions of religion which there prevailed. To the same effect is the old account preserved in the apocryphal book of Judith, where the irritated Holofernes is represented as requiring information concerning the Jewish people from all the neighbouring princes. On this subject the descendants of Lot might be supposed to be better informed than any of the others; and, accordingly, Achior, "the captain of all the children of Ammon," is represented as coming forward to furnish the required intelligence, which he does in a slight sketch of the history of the Hebrew nation, which, brief as it is, contains some facts not recorded in the Scriptures. At the outset, he says, "This people is descended of the Chaldeans; and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they know: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days." (Judith v. 2—8.) This statement would be curious and interesting if we could rely upon it as embodying the traditions of the Ammonites on this subject, seeing that Ammon, their ancestor, was the son of Lot, who was Abram's nephew, and the companion of his migration from Mesopotamia. But, from certain turns of expression, which are not in keeping with the character of the speaker, it is evident that the speech is put into his mouth by the narrator, and actually exhibits a Jewish tradition, worthy of notice as the oldest on this subject which exists in writing. Its information is not *at variance* with that which the Scriptures give, while it coincides, in substance, with the later statements of Josephus, and with the resulting effect of the less authentic traditions and tales of the Jews and Arabians.

We see, then, that all accounts out of Scripture, and not therein disagreeing with Scripture, state that Abram was of purer faith than his countrymen, and on that account left or was obliged to leave his native land. This may be true or not; for although Scripture states his proceeding as the result of an immediate command from Heaven—we know not, from the same authority, what previous enlightenments, what line of conduct, what difficulties, what past or present thoughts, prepared the patriarch to receive and to be guided by the Divine command. There were such doubtless; and even the command has the tone less of an original suggestion than of an authoritative interposition to decide a question which "the father of the faithful" had entertained, but found it difficult to determine.

It is not clear from Scripture that the father and surviving brother of Abram had by this time been brought over to his religious views. Its slight intimations seem to imply that they had not: nor does their going with him, when he departed from Ur of the Chaldees in obedience to the heavenly call, necessarily imply their participation in his religious sentiments, since various other considerations are supposable which might have influenced them, and they might even have recognised the authority of that Divine Being who spoke to Abram to direct his and even their own course, without being convinced, as Abram was, of his *exclusive* claim to honour and obedience.

So the whole house of Terah departed with Abram from the land of the Chaldees, and proceeded until they arrived at "Haran," or, more properly, "Charran" (as in Acts vii. 2), where, for some cause not declared to us—but probably the increasing infirmities of Terah, together with the temptations of a rich pastoral district for their flocks and herds—they were induced

to abide many years. After fifteen years, the father of Abram died in Haran, at the then reasonable old age of 205 years.

Abram was then at the ripe middle age of seventy-five years, when the Divine command, made to him fifteen years before, was renewed, with a slight but significant variation of its terms. The first command required him to leave his country and his kindred, or his natural connections, in the general sense, and was not considered necessarily to involve a separation from his immediate family; but the second call was more precise and stringent, requiring him to leave not only his country and his kindred, but also his "father's house." The Divine intentions being confined to his posterity, which as yet had no existence—for he had no child, his wife being barren—it was judged right to isolate him completely from all such natural and social ties as might interfere with this object. This was hard to bear, and God knew that it was; and, therefore, although it was designed that his faith should be tried to the uttermost, and made manifest as an example to his posterity and to the people of future ages and distant lands, these trials did not come upon him in one overwhelming demand, but were made successive, after intervals of repose,—rising one upon another, as his trust grew progressively stronger in that Great Being, the special object of whose care he had become. We shall see this throughout the history of this patriarch.

When the patriarch received his first call, the circumstances in which he was then placed, and the privilege of being still permitted to remain with all those who were, by natural ties, dearest to him, probably made the commanded migration indifferent or even desirable to him, and therefore no promises with reference to the future are held forth to encourage his obedience. But now, when he seems to have been more prosperously and happily situated, saving the recent grief of his father's death, the command to depart is accompanied, for the first time, by that high promise which was destined to cheer and bless his remaining life. This call and the annexed promise are thus given in the scriptural narrative:—"Then the Lord said unto Abram, Depart from thy land, and from thy kindred, *and from thy father's house*, unto *the* land which I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 1—3.)*

The land to which he was to go is not named, either on this or the former occasion; but the difference in the form of expression may have sufficed to intimate to Abram, that the country appointed for his sojourning would now be more distinctly indicated to him.

So Abram separated himself from the household of Nahor, his only surviving brother, and departed, not at that time knowing the point of his ultimate destination, but relying upon the guidance of the Divine Being whose command he was obeying. Lot, the son of his dead brother Haran, and brother to his wife Sarai, joined himself to him. For this no reason is given, but may be found in the fact, that, while Abram remained without issue, Lot was his natural heir; besides, it appears that Lot entertained an *exclusive* belief in the God of Abram, which there is some ground for suspecting that Nahor and his household did not. Lot had a household and property of his own, and the united parties must have formed a goodly pastoral company, such as may still be often met with crossing the plains and deserts of the east in search of new pastures. We are told that they went forth "and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran," which last clause applies to the "little ones" of their households—being the children which had been born of their slaves during the fifteen years of their stay in Haran.

Those who are, from reading or travelled observation, conversant with the existing

* The passage is here given as translated by Dr. Hales, more precisely than in our public version.

manners of the Asiatic pastoral tribes,—as the Arabians and the Tartars,—can easily form in their minds a picture of this great migrating party. Under the conduct of their venerable emir, and the active direction and control of his principal servants, we behold, from the distance, a lengthened dark line stretching across the plain, or winding among the valleys, or creeping down the narrow pathway on the mountain-side. That in this line there are hosts of camels we know afar off, by the grotesque outline which the figures of these animals make, their tall shapes and their length of neck; and that the less distinguishable mass which appears in motion on the surface of the ground is composed of flocks of sheep, and, perhaps goats, we can only infer from circumstances. On approaching nearer we find that all this is true, and that, moreover, many of the camels are laden with the tents, and with the few utensils and needments which the dwellers in tents require; and, if the natural condition of the traversed country be such as to render the precaution necessary, some of the animals may be seen bearing provisions and skins of water. The baggage-camels follow each other with steady and heavy tread, in files, the halter of those that follow being tied to the harness of those that precede, so that the foremost only needs a rider to direct his course; but nevertheless women, children, and old men are seen mounted on the other burdens which some of them bear. These are slaves, retainers, and other persons not actively engaged in the conduct of the party, and not of sufficient consequence to ride on saddled dromedaries. Such are reserved for the chiefs of the party, their women, children, relatives, and friends, and are not, unless it happen for convenience, strung together like the drudging animals which bear the heavier burdens.

For the youths and men of vigorous age, the slaves and shepherds, there is active employment in directing the orderly progress of the flocks, and in correcting the irregularities, friskings, and breaches which sometimes occur. In this service they are assisted by a stout staff, crooked at one end, —the origin of the pastoral and episcopal crook,—which, however, is but sparingly used by those most accustomed to the flocks, their familiar voices being in general quite sufficient to control and guide the sheep; and of their voices they make no stinted use, but exert them liberally in the incessant utterance of loud cries and shouts, reproaches, warnings, and encouragements. The feeble of the flock are very tenderly dealt with; the progress of the whole is but slow, on account of the lambs, and the ewes great with young; and some of the shepherds may be seen bearing in their arms the weaker lambs of the flock, or those which had been lately yeaned. The men engaged in these services are on foot, though a few of the principal may be on camels, or, preferably, on asses, if there be any of those animals in the troop. The whole conduct of the Oriental shepherds supplies many beautiful allusions and metaphors to the sacred writers of the Hebrews,—as where the prophet says that the good shepherd "shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isa. xl. 11.)

We have introduced this short description of the pastoral migrations with the view of enabling the reader to form some idea not only of this migration of Abram and Lot, but of the various other removals which are so frequently mentioned in the history of the pastoral patriarchs.

Nicolas of Damascus, an ancient author cited by Josephus, states that Abram, coming from the country of the Chaldeans, *which is above Babylon**, with a large company, tarried for a season at Damascus, and reigned there, before he went into the land of Canaan. He adds that the name of Abram continued to be very famous in all the region of Damascus, in which there was a place still called Beth-Abram (the house of Abram). Justin, in his extravagant account of the origin of the Jews, also numbers Abram among the kings of Damascus†. There is nothing in Scrip-

* A valuable geographical intimation this, by the way, showing how the name "Chaldee," and "land of the Chaldeans," was anciently applied.

† Nicol. Damascen. in Joseph. lib. i. c. 8; and in Euseb. 'Præpar.' lib. ix. c. 16; Justin, lib. xxxvi. c. 4.

ture to countenance this story, which is probably based on some tradition that Abram encamped for a while near Damascus, in his way to Canaan: even this we do not know; but it seems not unlikely, as that city lay on the most convenient route from Haran to the land of Canaan, and as the subsequently favoured domestic of the patriarch, whom he on one occasion describes as having been "born in his house," is, in another, called by him Eliezer *of Damascus*.

The history in Genesis gives us no account of this journey, which is the same afterwards made by Jacob, and the longest ever made by the Hebrew patriarchs. We are only told, with inimitable brevity, that "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." It would, to us, have been interesting to follow the route which was on this occasion taken. But, in our existing want of information, it is only necessary to observe that some writers tell us needlessly of the frightful deserts which Abram crossed in this journey. But we need not necessarily conclude that the present great desert of Syria was a desert then. And, if it were, seeing that flocks of sheep cannot, like a herd of camels, be conducted across a parched desert, destitute of herbage and of water, as the deserts of Syria and Arabia are, during summer, it will follow that the transit was made, if at all, in the early spring, when, from the recent winter and vernal rains, the Syrian desert, at least in its northern part, becomes a rich prairie, covered with fragrant and nutritive herbage. But no situation which has been assigned to Haran requires that the patriarch should at all cross this desert in journeying thence to the land of Canaan. Proceeding westward from beyond the Euphrates, he would skirt this desert on the north, and then, turning southward, he would follow the course of the mountains which border it on the west, being with little interruption most of the way in the enjoyment of the fine pastures and abundant waters of the plains and valleys which border, or are involved among, the Syrian mountains.

Arriving at last in the land of Canaan, the patriarch was arrested by the rich pastures of Samaria, near the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim; and in the beautiful valley of Moreh, which lies between these mountains, and where the city of Shechem was not long after founded, Abram formed his first encampment in the land.

Not long after his arrival, the Lord favoured the patriarch with a more distinct intimation of his intentions than any which he had hitherto received, by the promise that he would bestow on his posterity the land into which he had come. From this time forward Abram and the other patriarchs were constantly taught to regard the land of Canaan as the future heritage of their children.

Abram testified his gratitude and adoration by building there an altar unto JEHOVAH, who had appeared unto him. We are by this instructed that Abram even then knew God by this his high and peculiar name—that mystic name on which many have so largely written, and on which not a few deep, or ingenious, or simply absurd, speculations have been founded by Christians and by Jews *.

As this is the first act of religious service which is mentioned in the patriarchal history, and, indeed, the first recorded since the act of worship and sacrifice performed by Noah when he came forth from the ark, it deserves to be attentively considered. It is observable that we meet with no mention of temples or ecclesiastical structures in this age. The Sabæan idolaters, from among whom it appears that Abram came, did not, until a very long subsequent age, worship their gods in temples made with hands, but presented their offerings and sacrifices upon altars erected in the open air. Our information concerning the religious practices of the Canaanites is little more than negative; but there is nothing in the Scriptures or in the civil or religious state of society in this early age, which renders it probable that they, or

* Most Christian translators of the Old Testament, including our own, generally abstain from introducing the name in their versions, putting "the Lord" instead of Jehovah, in this following the example of the Jews, who, to avoid any attempt to pronounce the Name, read *Adonai*, instead of it; and of the Seventy, who sat down the word Κύριος in lieu of it.

even the inhabitants of Egypt, had buildings set apart for religious service. Egypt probably had the first temples: and from history we should infer that the earliest in at least Lower Egypt—which alone is the Egypt of the early Scriptures—was that at Heliopolis; and, through the measure of progress which has been made in deciphering the sculptured hieroglyphics of the old Egyptian monuments, we now know that this temple was originally founded by the first Osirtasen, upwards of three centuries later than the time now under our notice. This monarch also built a temple in the province of Crocodilopolis: but before his time, this new branch of learning has not ascertained that any temples existed in Egypt*. It may seem, therefore, that the practice of the patriarchs to render their religious rites at an open altar was the general practice of their time. It appears that they erected an altar of heaped stones, or earth, at every place where they purposed to remain encamped any considerable time, as well as at other places where God vouchsafed to manifest his presence to them. And many were the memorials of this kind—altars dedicated to JEHOVAH—which the Hebrew fathers erected, at different places, while they were "strangers and sojourners" in the Promised Land. We think it may be collected that at such altars sacrifices were not regularly or periodically offered, but only on extraordinary occasions; but the facts which the Scriptures furnish concerning the religious observances of the patriarchs are few, and these few it may be best to notice as they occur.

It may further be observed, that in all the patriarchal history there is not, in any nation, the mention of a priest—unless it be in the singular instance of Melchizedek, which will presently engage our notice. Besides this, the first distinct mention of priests as a body of men set apart for the service of religion, occurs, like that of temples, in Egypt, a good while after the times which now engage our attention. Priests, however, no doubt existed before temples; and under some complications of religious service, with which we are unacquainted, they may have existed in the time of Abram. In the patriarchal practice, however, which appears to have been that in general use, the functions which were in after times considered priestly appear to have been discharged by the eldest, or first-born of the family, and that this indeed was considered one of the most valuable privileges of his seniority. Our Talmudical information on this subject is in entire conformity with Scripture. It tells us that, before the tabernacle was erected, private altars and high places were in use for sacrifice. When the children of a family were to offer a sacrifice, then the father was the priest: but when the sons of a family were met together to offer sacrifice after they came to be themselves fathers of houses, having families of their own, and were separated from their father and their father's house—their father not being present with them—then the eldest son was the priest or sacrificer for himself and his brethren †.

A pastoral chief has no other alternatives than either to remove frequently to the new pastures which his flocks and herds require, or, retaining his household long in one place, to send forth his flocks, under the charge of trusty persons, to distant pastures. The former was the course which Abram took. His next recorded removal was about twenty-four miles from the plain of Moreh, southward, towards the vale of Siddim, where the valleys of the hilly country north of the plain of Jericho offer fine and luxuriant pasturage. In this district the patriarch pitched his tent near a mountain on the east of the place then called Luz, but to which, in a later day, Jacob gave the name of Bethel. There also the patriarch "built an altar to JEHOVAH, and called upon the name of JEHOVAH."

* See Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. i., chap. 2. This valuable writer, in his historical chapters, furnishes some very important Egyptian dates and facts, which will be useful to us; but as, in his references to supposed contemporary incidents in Jewish history, he makes use of the common Usherian chronology, which we do not, we shall be obliged to make our own applications and conclusions. In the present instance he necessarily allows no more than an interval of 180 years between Abraham's visit to Egypt and the reign of Osirtasen I.

† Tract. Melikim in Mishna, 14; 'Bereshith Rabba, fol. 7, cited in Shuckford, book v. p. 255.

When the exhaustion of the pasturages rendered further removals necessary, we learn that his progress was southward.

In those days there arose a famine in the land of Canaan, doubtless caused—as scarcity usually is caused in that country—by one or more seasons of excessive drought. It is the peculiar felicity of Egypt that its soil does not need local rains to awaken its productive powers, which are called into most vigorous operation by the periodical overflowings of the river Nile. There may be scarcity even in Egypt, for the river sometimes fails of its due redundance; but this happens but rarely, and when it does occur, the causes which produce it are to be found in the droughts of that remote country in which the river rises, or which it traverses in the early part of its course. But as these remote droughts which stint the water of the Nile and produce scarcities in Egypt—which has itself no adequate rains in its lower country, and none in its upper, to compensate for this want—are seldom so extensive as to have any serious influence in the countries which border on that land in which the river *terminates* its course, it follows that there is seldom any coincidence between the scarcities of Western Asia and those which occur, with comparative rarity, in Egypt. Thus that singular country has, in all ages, been regarded as the granary of Western Asia, not only from the extraordinary fertility produced by the periodical inundation of its soil, but from the circumstance that it might be expected to furnish a supply of corn at the very time when other countries were consumed with famine-producing droughts.

It is interesting to learn that this was the state of matters in the time of the patriarchs, who on all occasions looked towards Egypt, whenever a scarcity of corn was experienced in the land of Canaan.

So now, Abram, being in the south of the Promised Land, heard that there was corn in Egypt, and determined to proceed thither with his household. Josephus adds that he also wished to ascertain the religious sentiments of the Egyptians, and to teach them or to be taught by them; which is consistent enough with the traditionary history of Abram's earlier life, but has no warrant in Scripture.

Arriving on the borders of Egypt, the patriarch had an opportunity of making comparisons between the Egyptian women and his own wife, greatly to the advantage of the latter. She appears to have been a very fine woman; and, under the present circumstances, her comparatively fresh complexion, as a native of Mesopotamia, gained by the contrast with the dusky hue of the Egyptian females. It is true that Sarai was at this time sixty-five years of age; but this age is not to be estimated by the present standard of life, but according to the standard which then existed, by which the wife of Abram could not seem to her contemporaries of more advanced age than a woman of thirty or thirty-five appears to us.

Knowing the attraction of his wife's beauty, and being perhaps aware of some recent circumstances in Egypt which were calculated to awaken his apprehensions for the result, the heart of Abram failed him, in the very point in which the hearts of all men are more weak and tender than in any other, and he resolved to take shelter under an equivocation. He therefore said to his wife,—"Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, 'This is his wife:' and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee." (Gen. xii. 11, 13.) This was accordingly done; and we are instructed by this, and other similar incidents, that the men who figure in the history before us as the best and holiest in aggregate character, were not such immaculate representatives of ideal perfection as shine in common history and romance, but are true human beings, "compassed about with infirmities," as all men are, and tempted, as all men are, by their passions, doubts, or fears; and by such temptation too often drawn aside from the right path. The whole of the sacred book offers to us not a single character exempt from temptation; and it tells us of only

One whom all temptation left "without sin."

It appears that Abram did not over-estimate the effect which the beauty of Sarai was likely to produce upon the sensitive Egyptians. The attractions of the fair Mesopotamian stranger were speedily discovered, and became the theme of many tongues. She was at last seen by some of "the princes of Pharaoh;" and the report of her beauty becoming, through them, the talk of the court, soon reached the ears of the Egyptian king.

In Europe the tendency of civilization is to procure increased respect from the governing powers for the personal liberties and privileges of the people, and for the rights of property and the sanctities of private life; but this rule has ever been reversed in the east, where the most civilized nations have always been those in which the natural immunities of man have been the least regarded, and in which no natural or social privilege existed on which the sovereign despotism might not, if it so pleased, lay its iron hand freely. Here we have a very early instance of this. Egypt had doubtless at this time reached a higher point of civilization than any other country of which the sacred history takes notice—and here we read of the first act of despotism which that history records. Abram was, in the first place, afraid that he should be slain for the sake of his wife, for which reason he reported her as his sister; but no sooner did the reputation of the beauty of this alleged sister of a powerful emir—a stranger taking refuge in the country—arrive at the ears of its sovereign, than he sent to demand her for his harem. This is what the sovereigns of the most "civilized" oriental states often do, as a matter of royal right, when stimulated by the sight or rumour of a beautiful female among the sisters or daughters of their subjects; and the present case is a remarkable evidence of the early existence of this most offensive privilege of oriental despotism. It is evident that the patriarch had no appeal from the authority which made this grievous demand; and yet could not himself have been a willingly consenting party. That Abram was not the subject of the Egyptian king, but a newly-arrived stranger of distinction, rendered this a still stronger act of despotic power than it might otherwise have seemed; and it was probably from this consideration that Pharaoh sought to pacify or propitiate the patriarch by making him valuable presents, suitable to his condition as a pastoral chief—such as "sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels." Some reflection has been made upon the conduct of Abram in accepting these presents; but those who are acquainted with the usages of the east know that he dared not refuse them.

So Sarai was taken to the house of Pharaoh. This lamentable result of his weak equivocation did not so far rouse the patriarch's faith or courage as to make him avow the actual relationship between her and himself. But at this juncture it pleased God to interfere to prevent the evil consequences, which human means could not well have averted, by inflicting on Pharaoh and his house "great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife." What these plagues were we are not clearly told; but probably some grievous disease, of such a nature as, joined to some intimation to that effect, rendered it manifest to him that the infliction was intended to prevent or punish his designs upon the wife of another man. On this, the king sent for Abram, and after rebuking him with some severity for the dissimulation of his conduct, which had placed all parties in a dangerous position, desired him to take his wife and leave the country, at the same time giving orders to his people to facilitate his departure.

Seeing that the early condition of Egypt is a subject of great historical interest in itself, as well as from the early connection of the Hebrews with that country, the visit of Abram to it awakens our curiosity, and makes us studious to collect all the information which the account of that visit furnishes or indicates. The facts are few compared with those which transpire at a subsequent date; but these few are valuable.

We observe, in the first place, that this visit of Abram settles the question whether

this, the lower part of Egypt, was then dry. It was dry, and inhabited by an industrious agricultural population, who extracted from the soil so much more food than sufficed for their own subsistence, that, as previously noted, the country had already become the asylum of those who were oppressed by famine in other countries.

The impression which the account of the transactions in which Abram was engaged in Egypt affords, is very different from that which we receive from the account of his dealings with the petty sovereigns and states of Canaan. With them, Abram and the other patriarchs treat very much as with equals—as in the instances of the kings of Siddim, the king of Gerar, and "the children of Heth," not to mention the comparatively late instance of the affair between Jacob's family and the prince and people of Shechem. In all these cases the patriarchs are treated with deference and respect; and give free utterance to their sentiments, even those likely to be most unpalatable. But before Pharaoh, Abram, when reproved by him, answers not a word; and if the royal gifts which he received from the king of Egypt testified the consideration to which the foreign emir was entitled, it was the consideration of a superior to one whom he wished to benefit. We direct attention the rather to this circumstance, as Abram had a feeling in the matter of presents which led him, on every other occasion with which we are acquainted, to decline those which were offered to him; for which, on one of those occasions, he assigns to the king of Sodom the dignified reason,—"I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

In short, the idea which we derive from the account of this remarkable affair, is that Lower Egypt was even then a great and flourishing kingdom, ruled by a powerful and magnificent monarch, invested with many of the characteristics by which an oriental despotism has in all ages been distinguished, and surrounded by courtiers, who made it their prime object to minister to his tastes and passions. It will also be noted that this monarch was thus early distinguished by the title of Phrah, or, as we spell it, Pharaoh, which in all subsequent ages was borne by the native sovereigns of Egypt, and which is the Egyptian name for the sun, applied by way of eminence to him whom his subjects regarded as the chief of men. It may, moreover, not be unimportant to observe that slavery existed at this time in Egypt, as it did also in other countries. This is shown by Pharaoh's gift—men-slaves and women-slaves—to Abram; and if, as might be suggested, a foreign dynasty ruled then in Egypt, it is not impossible that at least some of these slaves may have been native Egyptians. Hagar "the bondwoman," of whom we shall presently read, was probably one of these women-slaves; and she is called an "Egyptian."

It would be a valuable piece of information to know what king or dynasty reigned in Egypt at the time of Abram's visit. But the sacred narrative does not mention any king of Egypt by his proper name till after the time of Solomon; and the Egyptian chronology at, and for some time after, this early date is still involved in much uncertainty and confusion, notwithstanding the light which has been thrown on the general subject by the progress made in deciphering the hieroglyphic inscriptions. But all the information from this source which has lately transpired, or with which further inquiry has made us acquainted, tends greatly to confirm the view of the matter which we have had occasion to state in another place *.

One of the best established facts in the very early history of Egypt is, that its lower country was for a long series of years (260) under the dominion of a race of pastoral nomades, while the upper country continued subject to the native sovereigns. This great fact has abundance of incidental confirmation, although many particulars which it might be most desirable to know remain in obscurity, and among these is the date at which the pastoral dominion in Egypt commenced or terminated. In the work to which we have referred, we have shown the strong probability that it had been put an end to

* 'Pictorial Bible,' note upon Exod. i. 8.

before the time of Joseph; and in confirmation of this we may now adduce the testimony of Mr. Wilkinson, who, from the state of the earliest monuments, and from the information which they afford, conceives that the irruption of the pastors was anterior to the erection of any building now extant in Egypt, and long before the accession of the 17th dynasty *, that is, in the earlier periods of Egyptian history, previous to the era of Osirtasen I. The monuments of that monarch satisfactorily prove that in his reign and that of his second successor, the Egyptians had already extended their conquests over some of the tribes of Asia, and were consequently free from any enemies within their own valley †. This writer also suggests, as a question, whether the dominion of the shepherd-kings, as they are called, in Egypt, may not have been overthrown by this Osirtasen. Now this king was, as Mr. Wilkinson conceives, coeval with Joseph, and must, at least, have been nearly so; and it is not a little remarkable that in concluding, from the evidence of monuments, that the pastor-kings were expelled before the accession of Osirtasen I., he obtains exactly the same conclusion as that to which Hales and Faber arrived, when, on purely historical data, they conceived that this great change took place before, but not long before, Joseph was made governor of Egypt; Hales fixing it about the year 1885 B.C. This coincidence of independent testimony, taking different lines of evidence, is very important; and its use for our present purpose is, that if the pastoral dynasty was extinguished before the time of Joseph's exaltation, it must have existed at the time of Abram's visit to Egypt, 185 years before, seeing that the conquering nomades occupied the country 260 years. No one supposes that their dominion had terminated *before* the visit of Abram; and that it had not, is indirectly evinced by the sacred narrative itself. In the time of Joseph's government every nomade shepherd was detested at the Egyptian court, in consequence of the oppressive and humiliating dominion which a race of pastors had exercised in the country. Of this we hear nothing in the time of Abram; although, if this race had then recently been expelled, the manifestations of that hatred must have been more manifest and lively in his time than nearly two centuries later. The result of all these considerations tends to intimate that one of the shepherd kings reigned in Lower Egypt at the time of Abram's journey to that country; and this conclusion, while it serves to explain some differing circumstances which we find in the Egyptian court as described in the respective times of Abram and Joseph, throws considerable light upon the picture which, from these accounts, the mind forms of both; and more especially illustrates the fact that, while the family of Jacob found favour at the court of Egypt, and was admitted into the country only for the sake of Joseph, Abram found no difficulty of access to the country, and was treated with consideration by the court in that very character—as a pastoral chief—which was regarded with abomination by the native government of a later day.

The fragments of Manetho intimate that the conquering nomades, while in occupation of Egypt, gradually adapted themselves to the customs and practices of the native Egyptians, while they were careful to maintain their alliance with their kindred tribes of the desert. And as this process of adaptation must have been in operation not less than seventy-five years, at the time now under our notice, we need not wonder that the reigning king bore the Egyptian sovereign title of Pharaoh, and that the external aspect of the court was probably not very different to what it might have been under a native prince; always excepting the sympathy between it and the desert nomades, as contrasted with the hatred of the ensuing native dynasties towards the same race of people.

The degree of attention which has here been given to this interesting subject, while not unsuitably subjoined to the notice of Abram's sojourn in Egypt, forms a necessary

* The 17th dynasty commenced B.C. 1651, and was introduced by Osirtasen II. The *first* Osirtasen belonged to the 16th dynasty, and Wilkinson thinks he began to reign about B.C. 1740, and reigned forty-three years.

† Wilkinson, vol. i. ch. 1.

introduction to the whole history of the Hebrew intercourse with that country.

By the time that the patriarch returned from Egypt to the land of Canaan, the scarcity which had driven him thence appears to have ceased. He retraced his steps through the southern part of the country, and at last arrived at the place between Bethel and Hai where his tents had been before; and at the altar which he had formerly built upon one of the neighbouring hills he again enjoyed the satisfaction of "calling upon the name of JEHOVAH."

Since Abram and Lot were formerly encamped in the same place, their substance had been greatly increased. We are now told that "Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." The royal gifts of the king of Egypt had, no doubt, contributed considerably to the increase of his previous stock of cattle; and as the precious metals are mentioned among the articles of his wealth immediately on his return from Egypt, they were most likely obtained in the same country, either by the gift of the king or from the sale of the produce of his flocks to the towns-people. This is, indeed, the first occasion on which the precious metals are mentioned, in all history, as articles of property and wealth—that is, as shown by subsequent transactions—as the representatives of value. Lot, who had hitherto been the constant companion of Abram's migrations, was also rich, having great possessions of "flocks, and herds, and tents." That he also is not said to possess silver and gold is a rather remarkable omission, and may be significant.

Their united pastoral wealth was so great that it became manifest that the two parties could not remain together much longer. There is not, indeed, any scarcity of water in the district in which they were then encamped; but the land unappropriated by the Canaanites in that part of the country was insufficient to furnish free pasture to all their flocks and herds; and hence quarrels about the choice and rights of pasture arose between the shepherds of Abram and Lot, who were probably more zealous about the separate interests and rights of their masters than they were themselves. Lot, however, does not in his general character appear to have been at all indifferent to his own interests; and the generous and disinterested proposal which Abram made to prevent all future difference or difficulty, looks very much like an answer from him to some remonstrance or complaint which his nephew had been making. He said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." In the life of a Bedouin pastor, the concession of a choice of pasturage to another chief is the most extraordinary act of generosity which he can possibly show, in consequence of the large interests which are involved; and, under all the circumstances, it becomes almost sublime when the claims of the party to whom the concession is made to the right of selection are only equal, or, as in the present case, inferior to those of the conceder. An English grazier may have some idea of this, but it is only by a Bedouin that it can be fully appreciated.

Lot made no scruple of availing himself of the advantage which his uncle's liberal proposal gave to him. From the heights on which they stood, the vale of Siddim offered a most inviting prospect. It was well watered everywhere—which alone is a great advantage to the possessor of flocks and herds—which, with the exuberant vegetation which resulted from it, with the prospect of fair cities here and there, gave it the aspect of a terrestrial paradise. The low, broad, and warm valley, fertilized by the fine river which passed through it, also suggested a resemblance to the rich valley of the Nile, from which they had lately come. Lot, beholding all this, made choice of all the plain of the Jordan for his pasture-ground, and soon after removed to it with all his possessions. We are told that "he pitched his tent toward Sodom"—or made the neighbourhood of that city his head-quarters, not

probably caring so much as Abram might have done about the depraved character of the inhabitants; for he could not well have been ignorant of the fact that the men of Sodom were notoriously "wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."

Now at last, by the operation of circumstances, without any immediate command from God, Abram was brought to that state of complete isolation from all his natural connections which the Divine purpose, to preserve his future race apart and unmixed, rendered necessary. But although this present separation, which left the patriarch, more completely than before, alone in a strange land, was not immediately caused by the Divine interposition, no sooner had Lot taken his departure than the Lord again manifested his presence to Abram, to cheer and encourage him by the renewal, in more distinct terms, of the promises formerly made to him. To the childless man was promised a posterity countless as the dust—the future inheritors of the land in which he dwelt—which land he was now directed to traverse, in its length and breadth, to survey the goodly heritage of his children, and to take, as it were, possession of it in their behalf.

In obedience to this direction, Abram broke up his camp near Bethel and departed, proceeding first towards the south. His next encampment was formed about a mile from the town of Arba (afterwards called Hebron), in the fair and fertile valley of Mamre, where he pitched his tent under a terebinth tree, which became in after ages famous for his sake.

The patriarch was still at this place when his history brings us acquainted with the first warlike transaction of which any record remains.

It appears that, in this age, the Assyrian power predominated in Western Asia; and we should not wonder if it be ultimately discovered that even the "Shepherd-kings" of Egypt were Assyrian viceroys, which discovery would throw great light on several circumstances in the lives of the patriarchs. Be this as it may, we learn that, some years before the date at which we are now arrived, an Assyrian force had crossed the Euphrates, and made extensive conquests in Syria. This force appears to have been composed of detachments from the several small nations or tribes which composed or were subject to the Assyrian empire, each commanded by its own *melech* or petty king. Of these kings, one named "Chedorlaomer, king of Elam," probably Elymais, appears to have been left viceroy of the conquests west of the Euphrates. This chief, in the end, resolved to carry his arms southward, and with this object took with him, not only the warriors drawn from his own clan, but those commanded by three other of such "kings," namely, Amraphel, king of Shinar (or Babylonia); Arioch, king of Ellasar; and another called Tidal, who, from his title, "king of Goïm," or, if we translate the word, "of peoples," may seem to have ruled a mixed people or union of small tribes. Although the history only requires the mention of the vale of Siddim, we think it wrong to infer from thence that no other district of southern Syria was involved in the consequences of this expedition. The intermediate country, particularly on the coast of the Jordan and the country beyond, possessed by the Horim of Mount Seir, probably experienced its effects, although we only read that the four commanders made war with the five petty kings of the plain, being Bera, king of Sodom; Birsha, king of Gomorrah; Shinab, king of Admah; Shember, king of Zeboim; and the unnamed king of Bela, afterwards called Zoar. Being defeated, these five kings were made tributary to Chedorlaomer, whom we have supposed to have been viceroy of the Assyrian conquests west of the Euphrates; and in this state of subjection they remained twelve years. But, in the thirteenth year, some unrecorded circumstances encouraged the kings of the plain to withhold their tribute, in which act we may reasonably conclude that other districts of southern Syria concurred. The year following, Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him undertook a new expedition to punish the revolters; and that they did not proceed at once against the kings of the plain, but went to the countries beyond the vale of Siddim,

and only noticed it on their return northward, seems to us to give a very clear sanction to our conclusion—that other neighbouring districts were also subjugated by the Assyrians thirteen years before, and participated in the revolt of the thirteenth year. And this conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that the mere incidents of this expedition would seem to have been far more important than what we must otherwise suppose to have been its sole or principal object. Coming from the north, the Assyrian commanders traversed the country east of the Jordan, overthrowing in their way the gigantic races by which that country appears to have been inhabited. The river Jordan at this time flowed on in a widened stream, beyond the vale of Siddim to the eastern arm of the Red Sea; and continuing their progress southward, along the eastern borders of that river, the invaders smote the Horim who dwelt in the caverns and fortresses of Mount Seir. Where they crossed the Jordan we know not, but we next find them returning northward along its western border, reducing the tribes who inhabited the verge of the wilderness of Paran, on the south of Palestine, namely, the Amalekites, and such of the Amorites as abode on the south-western borders of the vale of Siddim. Arriving at last at that vale, the five kings by whom it was ruled went forth to give them battle. But they were defeated and fled. Now the vale of Siddim was of a bituminous nature, and its surface was in consequence much broken up into deep pits and fissures, into which a large number of the natives who had been in the battle were, in their flight, driven by the victors. Those who escaped, knowing that the towns offered no safety, fled to the neighbouring mountains. The conquerors then proceeded to ravage the cities of the plain. In this they met with no opposition, as all the adult population fit to bear arms had been defeated in the battle. They took all the moveable property and provisions and departed, carrying away with them as captives the women, children, and other people whom they found in the towns. That they did not burn the towns and destroy the people, indicates that the usages of war were less barbarous in this age than they afterwards became—perhaps, because war was as yet a new thing, and human life continued to be regarded as a thing too precious—even to those who held it in their power—to be needlessly sacrificed.

Among the prisoners was Lot, who, it appears, had relinquished the custom of dwelling in tents, and the peculiar character of a nomade shepherd, and had taken the first step into the usages of settled life, by dwelling in a fixed abode, in a town, sending forth his shepherds to the pastures with his flocks and herds. The evil city of Sodom was that in which he had his residence; and for this choice of an abode he suffered on more than one occasion. As a stranger, he had probably not been expected by the king of Sodom, or had declined, to go forth to the battle; and his servants, who alone could have rendered his aid of much consequence, were probably abroad with his cattle. Be this as it may, Lot, with his family and goods, were among the spoil with which the conquerors departed, northward, from the vale of Siddim on their homeward march.

The news of this calamity, which had befallen his nephew, was borne to "Abram the Hebrew" by one of those who had escaped. The patriarch was then still encamped in the valley of Mamre; and he acted on this occasion with all the decision and promptitude which attend all the operations of a nomade chief. He instantly called out all of his people who were able to bear arms*, and in whom he could most confide, —these were the servants who were "born in his own house" or camp, than which they knew no other home, and were attached to their master as to a father. The number of these was 318; and when we make a proportionable addition of slaves bought by himself†

* Whenever this expression, "able to bear arms," is used in the early chapters of the history, it must always be understood to mean all the adult males not disqualified by sickness, accident, or age. Among nomade tribes, to this day, every male is versed in the use of arms from childhood, and takes his part in the military operations of his tribe. This also continues to be the case, even in the first stages of settled life.

† That Abram had purchased slaves appears in Gen. xvii. 12.

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in the course of his life, and those presented to him by the king of Egypt—on whose naturally weaker attachment to him the patriarch did not on this occasion make any claim—we obtain a much clearer idea of his wealth and the extent of his establishment than without this incidental statement we should have been able to realize.

Three Amoritish chiefs, brothers, by name Mamre (from whom the valley took its name), Eshcol, and Aner, who were friends and allies of Abram, joined him with their clans; and we need not suppose that they did this *entirely* out of regard to the patriarch, as is usually stated, seeing that they also had an interest in the matter, for the tribe to which they belonged had, as we have seen, been smitten by the Assyrians.

The four nomade chiefs, having united their forces, hastened in pursuit of the four conquering kings, and overtook them about the place which was in the after-times called Dan, near the sources of the Jordan. The assault was exactly in such style as still prevails among the Bedouin tribes, which avoid, whenever possible, a clear open fight with a superior or even an equal force, but rather seek their object by sudden surprises and unexpected attacks; opportunities for which are easily found by the neglect, even to infatuation, of employing sentinels and scouts. So Abram, overtaking by night the force which he pursued—or rather, probably, delaying till the night season his advance upon them—divided his people so that they might rush in at once upon them from different quarters, and by overturning the tents and creating all possible confusion, suggest to the enemy, thus roused from their rest, exaggerated ideas of such numerous assailants as it must be hopeless to resist. The slaughter, as such affairs are managed by nomades, is not generally great, and was probably the less on the present occasion, from the fear which the pursuers must have been in, of injuring, in the darkness of the night, those whom they came to deliver. Struck with a panic, the Assyrians fled, leaving behind them all their spoil; and, lest they should have leisure to reflect and rally, Abram chased them about eighty miles, as far as a place called Hobah, to the north of Damascus.

Many writers have pointed out this transaction as one of the most improbable in the Hebrew history; but it is one which a person acquainted with the usages or even the history of the east receives without the least hesitation. The ease with which a very large body of men may be thrown into a panic by the night attack of a very small one is familiar in *all* military history. But the present case needs not such illustration. It rather appears that we form too exalted a notion of the force of the invaders, arising, perhaps, from the ideas of power and magnificence which we connect with the title of "king." But what the kings of this age usually were, and what the general extent of their power, we have already seen; and even in our own day, too much stress would not, in another case, be laid upon a title which is given equally to the lord of a few hamlets in Africa and to the sovereigns of England or France. Whether the four kings were themselves subject to some greater power for which they acted, as we conceive, or were independent, as some suppose, and only confederated for the purposes of this expedition, the conclusion as to their own condition of petty sovereigns, commanders of their own clans or districts, remains the same, and gives us no reason to suppose that the forces which they conducted were very numerous, or more than relatively formidable. Their strength arose from their association; and then was not such as the five petty kings of the plain were afraid to confront, or the four nomade chiefs to pursue. There is nothing to suggest the idea of a considerable army, either in the circumstances of the time—or even of the present time in the same country—or in the exploits which were performed, which are such as have been performed by small troops during the feudal ages, in Europe, or by a still smaller force of Bedouins or Toorkmans in our own day, dashing like a storm over a large tract of country thinly inhabited by people dispersed in small and distant communities, with no defence but in themselves, and allowed no time to combine in resistance. If the forces

of the three Amoritish brothers bore any proportion to that of Abram, the whole pursuing party may have consisted of 1000 men; and if we go so far as to suppose the invading kings had 1000 each, making 5000, the defeat of such a body by 1000 Bedouins in open fight is very far from being without example. And Abram's victory over Chedorlaomer was won, not in open fight, but by a sudden surprise in the night season.

This distinguished action of the patriarch was most acceptable to the native states: for even those which do not appear to have been immediately affected by the expeditions of the Assyrians, could not but regard their progress and success with apprehension; and the great respect with which Abram is ever after this treated by the natives, may, perhaps, in a considerable degree be regarded as the effect of his conduct on this occasion.

The king of Sodom—who had, with his escaped people, come down from his mountain retreat, when the Assyrians withdrew from the plain they had desolated—now hastened to meet and salute the returning conqueror. They met in the valley of Shaveh, otherwise called the King's Dale, which is supposed by most writers to be the same as the place afterwards known as the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the eastern side of Jerusalem. The king of Sodom, deprived of all his substance, had no refreshment to offer the delivering force, which may well have been exhausted by the pursuit and return through a country which the enemy had already desolated. But what was on this occasion necessarily wanting on the part of king Bera, was abundantly supplied by the spontaneous and hearty liberality of a neighbouring prince, whose name, Melchizedek (the just king), is honourably indicative of the estimation in which his character was held, in an age when the names which men bore were made significant of the qualities for which they were most distinguished. He was king of a place called Salem, which has been generally conceived to be the original of the subsequently renowned city of Jeru*salem*; although some authors have preferred the authority of Jerome, who says that Salem was a town near the famous ford over the Jordan at Bethshan or Scythopolis, which still, even to this time, preserved this name, and the inhabitants of which, fondly cherishing the tradition which placed Melchizedek among its kings, went so far as to point out the ruins of a large building as the remains of his palace.

This Melchizedek, king of Salem, on the approach of Abram and his men, went forth to meet them with an ample supply of victuals*. He was, like Abram, a worshipper of the Most High; and as, in that age, the chief, whether king or pastoral sheikh, discharged all such priestly offices as were then in use: he was also, like Abram, the priest of the Most High to his own people, and, as such, he, with great propriety, invoked the blessing of God upon the chief to the wants of whose weary people he so liberally ministered. The patriarch, much of whose conduct on this occasion was manifestly influenced by a generous care of his own reputation, acknowledged the seasonable and abundant refreshment which the king of Salem had afforded, by bestowing on him a tenth part of the booty he had won; thus acting, as was said of him on another occasion, "as a king to a king."

It is to this day a law of the desert, that if one tribe defeats another which has plundered a third, the conquering tribe is bound to liberate the persons belonging to the latter, but is entitled to retain all the booty which has been won, without distinguishing, unless it so please, to which of the parties it originally belonged. Conformably with a similar practice, the king of Sodom proposed that Abram should retain all the property, but restore to him all the persons he had recaptured. To this proposal the patriarch replied,—"I have lifted up my hand† unto JEHOVAH, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a sandal-thong, and that I will not take anything that is thine, *lest thou shouldest say, I have*

* "Bread and wine" in the sacred narrative; but it is well known that, in the Hebrew idiom, bread and wine, being at the head of meats and drinks, stand for all kinds of victuals. Hence Josephus describes this as a kingly entertainment.

† That is, "I have sworn."

made Abram rich." He mentioned such of the retaken victuals as his young men had already eaten as the only exception; and, with very proper delicacy, left his three Amoritish friends, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, at liberty to retain that share of the spoil which custom allowed to them, and which it does not appear that they were incited by his example to decline.

Abram returned to his encampment in the valley of Mamre, and Lot returned to his abode in Sodom.

It appears very likely that the patriarch was troubled by some apprehensions of the return of the Assyrians, in greater force, to avenge their defeat: for to some such fears would seem to have been addressed the encouraging words which the Divine voice afterwards spoke to him:—"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." But the heart of the patriarch was then faint from the thought of promises long postponed, and hopes long deferred, and he ventured to give expression to his feelings, and asked, Where was his hope of reward, when posterity was still withheld from him, and he saw no other prospect than that he should have to adopt his house-born servant, Eliezer of Damascus, as his heir. This, while it hints the existence of a custom of adoption still very common in the east, is remarkable for its omitting to notice any claims which Lot might be supposed to have in preference to Eliezer, and, perhaps, intimates that the estrangement between the uncle and nephew was greater than appears; or that some usage or custom, which we cannot detect, operated to oppose the succession of Lot when the separation of his clan from that of Abram had taken place.

The Lord only rebuked this distrust by new promises. He assured him that no adopted son, no blood relation, should be his heir, but his own very child: and again he was drawn forth and bade to look on the stars of heaven, and count them if he was able; for his seed should be as numerous as they. On this, Abram's wavering faith in the Divine promise was strengthened; and he again believed. The LORD then proceeded to remind him that he had been brought from a far country to inherit the land in which he dwelt; and was assured that he should inherit it indeed. His faith again started at this, and he asked, "Whereby shall I KNOW that I shall inherit it?"

In those days, when men would make a most solemn covenant with each other, they proceeded thus:—they took one of every kind of beast or bird used in sacrifice—being a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. The beasts they divided, and laid the pieces opposite each other, at such a distance that a man could pass between them; but the birds, being small and of the same kind, were not divided, but placed entire opposite each other. Then the party making the agreement or covenant passed between the pieces, declaring the terms by which he bound himself to abide. As this was the strongest and most solemn method Abram knew of contracting a binding obligation, God thought proper to make use of it on this occasion. The patriarch was directed to make the customary arrangements; and having made them, he remained till evening watching the carcases, to protect them from injuries by beasts or birds. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo! an horror of great darkness fell upon him." Then it was that God made a larger and more distinct declaration of his intentions than the patriarch had hitherto received. He was informed that his early descendants should be afflicted four hundred years in a strange land, after which they should be brought forth from that land with great riches, to take possession of the promised country, the utmost limits of which, even to the Euphrates, were now defined, and the existing nations specified whose domains they should possess. Many reasons might seem obvious for the delay of which Abram is now first warned; but the only one assigned on this occasion is, that the iniquity of the nations to be dispossessed was "not yet full;" by which we are disposed to understand that they had not yet cast God utterly from their knowledge, into whatever errors of practice and opinion they had fallen. To Abram himself it was promised that he should be gathered to his

fathers in peace, and buried in a good old age. The sun was now set, and it was dark, when the patriarch saw a cloud of smoke, like that of a furnace, accompanied by a flame of fire, pass between the severed parts to ratify the covenant; and by that fire the victims were probably consumed.

Sarai, the wife of Abram, desired a son no less fervently than her husband. But she had been considered barren before she left Mesopotamia; she was now seventy-five years of age; and she had waited ten years since their hearts were first gladdened by the promise of an heir. She therefore thought the case was hopeless as regarded herself; and began to reflect that, although a son had been promised to Abram, it had not been said, and did not necessarily follow, that this son should be the fruit of her own womb. Explaining these views to the patriarch, she prevailed upon him to resort to a custom of the time, of which there are still some traces in the east, under which the man takes a secondary wife, whose children become his undoubted heirs, equally with any other children he may have; and if the woman is the slave or attendant of the chief wife, or is provided by the chief wife, the children are, in a legal point of view, considered hers: and, in the same point of view, the condition of the actual mother remains unchanged, though in practice it necessarily sustains some modification from the operation of the feelings arising from the connexions which are formed, especially when her children are grown up. The female whom Sarai proposed to Abram as her substitute was her own handmaid, a woman of Egypt, named Hagar, who may be supposed to have been one of the female slaves whom the king of Egypt gave to the patriarch.

In due time it was known that Hagar had conceived; and the prospect of becoming the mother of Abram's long-promised heir had a mischievous effect upon her mind, leading her to treat her mistress with disrespect. Sarai, through whose preference and management all this had been brought about, was stung to the quick by this treatment, and complained of it to Abram with some sharpness, insinuating that, without some encouragement from him, Hagar durst not be so impertinent to her. The patriarch himself respecting the rights of his wife, and displeased at Hagar's presumption (which those who know anything of oriental women of her class, will believe to have been very coarsely and offensively manifested), reminded Sarai that the Egyptian was still her bond servant, and that her authority was sufficient to prevent or punish the treatment of which she complained. Being thus assured that he would not interfere, Sarai proceeded to a more unsparing exercise of the powers with which she was invested, than the raised spirits of the Egyptian bondmaid could brook; and she therefore fled, directing her course towards her own country. It is a terrible and perilous thing for a woman alone and on foot, to pass the desert which lies between the land of Canaan and Egypt and we know not how one might do it and live. Nor did Hagar accomplish this enterprise; for she was as yet but upon the borders of the desert, and was tarrying for refreshment and rest by a well of water when an angel of God appeared to her, and persuaded her to return and submit herself to her mistress; encouraging her to obedience by the assurance that the child she then bore in her womb would prove a son, whom she was directed to name Ishmael [God attendeth], because the LORD had attended to her affliction. She was also assured that this son should be the parent of a numerous race; and that while in his character, as typifying that also of his descendants, he should be wild and fierce as the desert ass—his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him—he should never be expelled or rooted out from the domain which God would give to him*. Thus instructed and encouraged, Hagar returned to her master's camp in the valley of Mamre; and in due season brought forth a son, to whom, in obedience to the angel's direction, Abram gave the name of Ishmael.

* This is the best interpretation we can give to the expression, "and he shall dwell in the face of all his brethren."

CHAPTER III.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

After the birth of Ishmael thirteen years passed away, during which it would seem that both Abram and Sarai were satisfied to rest in the conclusion, that the son of Hagar was the long-promised and divinely-appointed heir of the patriarch. They had the less doubt of this, seeing that Abram was now on the verge of 100 years old, and the age of Sarai was only ten years less. It was at this time that Abram was again favoured with a manifestation of the Lord's presence; and no sooner did he hear the Divine voice, then he fell upon his face, and remained in that most reverent of postures while it continued to speak to him. He was reminded that there was a covenant of God with him, that he should be the father of many nations. And, as a sign of this, he was directed—according to a custom which has to this day remained common in the East, of changing the name to render it significantly applicable to new developments and circumstances—to call himself no longer Abram (*high father*), but Abraham (*father of a multitude*). On this occasion the Lord's communications to the patriarch were unusually full and explicit, and cleared up much which remained previously uncertain —thus corroborating an observation already made, that at every fresh appearance to him, he received, not only confirmations of what had been already promised or foretold, but an addition to his previous knowledge. So now, while the promises as to the future Hebrew race are confirmed, Abraham now first learns that he is to be the father of other races—many races; for, lest he should suppose that the plurality applied to the subdivisions in the race of the heir of the promise, he is told, "I will make *thee* exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." He is further assured of the permanency—the continuing effect to his posterity—of the covenant made with him,—that He, Jehovah, would not only be his God, but the God of the chosen race to spring from him, and that the land in which he was a stranger should be their permanent possession. To be as an enduring and ineradicable token of this covenant, sealed in their flesh, the rite of circumcision was instituted, and directed to be exercised, not only upon Abraham himself and his son Ishmael, but upon all the males of his household, whether they had been born in that household or obtained by purchase or gift from strangers. And this was to be, in all future generations of Abraham's descendants, the perpetual sign of a perpetual covenant, insomuch that he who did not receive the sign in his flesh, should be regarded as an alien to the covenant, and disentitled to any share in its benefits. In all future time the rite was to be administered on the eighth day from the birth of the child, probably because (as in the case of animals destined for sacrifice under the law) a child was not considered perfect, or cleansed from the impurities of its birth, until seven days had passed over it.

After the directions which were given in the matter of circumcision, it pleased God to furnish the first distinct intimation that Sarai was to be the mother of the heir of the promises. In the first place, and introduced by the words, "As for Sarai thy wife" —he is directed to call her no longer Sarai [or *my princess*, appropriatively], but Sarah [or *princess*, indefinitely and at large]; the reason for which change is given or implied in the immediately following promise:— "And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." The ideas thus presented to the mind of Abraham were so new and strange to him, after he had been so long resting in the conclusion that Ishmael was the promised heir, and had so thoroughly

dismissed all expectation of issue by Sarah, that he laid his face still closer to the ground, and laughed within himself, as he thought of the confirmed barrenness of his wife, and the old age of both; yet less, probably, as being incredulous or doubtful, than as being struck by the singularity of such circumstances.

But then, as our affections are engaged by that which we know, and the heart takes no cognizance of ties which do not yet exist, the mind of Abraham turned to his living son Ishmael, whom he knew and loved, and whose claims to the inheritance of the promise he seems at the time to have considered quite sufficient; or, rather, his anxious desire for posterity had found a rest in Ishmael, and that rest he was, perhaps, not quite willing to have disturbed by the question of inheritance being again laid open. He, therefore, ventured gently to intimate his willingness—even his desire—that Ishmael should be regarded as the heir of the promise, by whispering, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" But God, in answer to this, renewed the declaration of his purpose, that the promised heir must be born of Sarah, and assured him that she should bear him a son indeed; and then, at once to commemorate and gently rebuke the secret laughter of heart with which he had first received this intimation, it was directed that the name of Isaac [*laughter*] should be given to this son, whose birth within a year was distinctly promised. But although the Lord had clearly intimated that this unborn son was he with whom the Divine covenant would be established, the patriarch's regard for Ishmael was respected, and his anxiety for his welfare satisfied, by the assurance that he should be blessed abundantly in the usual objects of a Bedouin chief's ambition and desire,—he should be multiplied exceedingly, the honoured founder of twelve tribes who should, collectively, form a great nation.

We have dwelt particularly on this most remarkable act of intercourse, principally on account of its historical importance; for the Divine intentions—which are so largely developed on this occasion—are not to be treated as incidents, but as *the* great animating and guiding principle in the early Hebrew history; but also on account of the very beautiful manifestation which it offers of that condescension to human feeling, that gentleness and that tender consideration, which the Hebrew Scriptures ascribe to the Lord of the Universe.

During the heat of the day the interior of the tent is usually close and oppressive; and the Bedouin likes then to sit near the entrance, on the shady side—that, while protected from the sun, he may enjoy the comparative freshness of the open air. Abraham was sitting thus, about three months after this transaction, when he saw three strangers approaching, who bore the appearance of wayfaring men. Exactly as a Bedouin would do at the present day, the patriarch no sooner saw them than he hastened to press his hospitality upon them. For the reason we have just stated, he did not ask them into his tent, but invited them to sit under the shade of his terebinth-tree, until victuals should be got ready for them, and water brought to refresh their feet and cleanse them from the dust of travel. To be allowed thus to entertain strangers is the first personal ambition of the less-corrupted Bedouins; and so sincerely do they feel that they are the favoured parties, and so deep the shame to them of having their hospitality rejected, that we are not—as our differing customs might suggest—to suppose that the patriarch on this occasion proceeded in a manner unusual to him; although there was that in the dignified appearance of one of the three strangers, which, while it led Abraham to single him out as the proper person to be addressed, may have induced him to accost him as "my lord," and to "bow himself towards the ground" more reverently than was his wont. This dignified stranger graciously accepted the invitation of the patriarch, and desired him to do as he had said.

The manner in which Abraham proceeded to provide an entertainment for the strangers, and the expedition with which this appears to have been accomplished, afford us much instruction, and serves to show very clearly

that the main usages of nomade life are unchanged to this day. The preparation of bread, even to the grinding of the corn, is the exclusive work of women; and as the bread is made merely as the temporary occasion requires, and none is kept in hand from one day to another, a baking of bread always attends the arrival of a stranger. Abraham, therefore, hastened into the tent to Sarah, and desired her to make ready quickly three measures of fine flour, and to knead it and bake cakes upon the hearth. He then hastened to the herd, and took from thence a calf, "tender and good," which he gave to one of his young men to slay and dress; and this indicates the antiquity of another Bedouin custom, of slaying an animal for the entertainment of a stranger arrived in the camp; and also shows that even then the Orientals had no objection to meat which had been cooked before the vital warmth had departed from it. Abraham had only promised to bring "a morsel of bread to comfort their hearts;" but now, with the bread, he brought the calf, with some of those preparations of butter and milk, for which pastoral tribes have in all ages been renowned. Having brought the meat, he sat not down with them to partake of it; but, according to a still subsisting method of showing respect, he stood by his visitants under the terebinth-tree while they ate.

Sarah remained in the tent. The women do not generally make their appearance on such occasions; and it is considered in the last degree impertinent for a stranger to take notice of their existence, or to make any inquiries about them. Abraham must therefore have been not a little startled when the seeming principal of the strangers abruptly asked him, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" and that the stranger should know her by a name so recently imposed, may well have increased his surprise. He answered, shortly, "Behold, in the tent." On which the stranger, by declaring that Sarah should in nine months become the mother of a son, revealed his high character to the patriarch; and, accordingly, he is, in the remainder of the account, distinguished by the ineffable name of JEHOVAH. As they were sitting just outside the tent, Sarah herself, who was within it, heard what passed, and she laughed incredulously to herself, knowing well that not only had she ever been barren, but that she was past the time of life at which all the women of her day ceased to bear children. On this the Lord asked why she had laughed, and why she was incredulous; for was there anything too hard for the Lord? and he ended in repeating the terms of the assurance he had just given. Sarah, being afraid, and knowing that no one could have heard her laughter, ventured to deny that she had laughed; but was stopped by the rebuke, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

Soon after, the strangers arose, and departed, directing their course towards the vale of Siddim; and Abraham went with them a part of the way. As they proceeded, the Lord condescended to make known to him the object of the present motion towards Sodom; which, speaking after the manner of men, as one who needed to examine and inquire before proceeding to judgment, he does in these words;—"Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW." The other two then went on in advance towards Sodom, while Abraham remained alone with the Lord. The patriarch knew what interpretation to put upon the last ominous words; and the character of the inhabitants of the plain was too well known to him to permit him to cherish a hope for them, as matters now stood. He therefore, having himself had large experience of the Lord's tender mercies, ventured, although feeling that he was but "dust and ashes," to draw near and speak to him on their behalf. It was not possible, he knew, but that the Judge of all the earth should do right; and, therefore, far must it be from him to slay the innocent with the wicked. But, yet more, the patriarch urgently desired that, for the sake of only a few just men in Sodom, the whole city might be

spared. He named fifty; but after this request had been granted, his recollection of the intense corruptions of Sodom made him anxious to reduce the number to the lowest possible limit; and therefore, by successive petitions, all readily yielded to him, he gradually brought down the number to ten, for the sake of which small number of righteous men the Lord declared that even Sodom should not be destroyed.

The Lord then departed on his way, but not—at least not in bodily form—to Sodom; and Abraham returned to his tent in Mamre.

It was even-tide when the two angels came to the town of Sodom. Lot was then sitting at the gate, and, influenced by those old Bedouin habits of hospitality in which he had been brought up, he advanced to meet them, and after proper testimonials of respect, such as Abraham before had shown, he invited them to become his guests for the night, after which they might rise early in the morning and pursue their way. There were in those days no such caravanserais, or lodging-houses, as now afford house-room to friendless travellers in the towns of the East; and, therefore, in at first declining the kind offer of Lot, they expressed an intention of spending the night in the street. But he pressed them greatly, so that they at last yielded, and went with him to his house, where "he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat." After they had supped, and before they lay down, the house of Lot was surrounded by a great mob, composed of "both old and young, all the people from every quarter," which large expressions are no doubt designedly employed, to acquaint us with such universal depravity in Sodom as rendered her unable to furnish the ten righteous men on whom her salvation depended. The object which thus assembled them together — the abominable outrage they contemplated on Lot's angelic guests —exhibits a degree and shape of moral guilt of which we could have had no previous idea when told, in general terms only, that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Lot, whose Bedouin notions of hospitality required him to incur any sacrifice, and risk any danger, rather than that any evil should befall those who had come under the shadow of his roof, went out to the mob, shutting the door after him; and, after expostulating with them on the enormity of the conduct they contemplated, endeavoured to pacify them by the offer of a revolting alternative, which, while it shows the sense he entertained of the supreme obligation of his hospitable duties, emphatically illustrates the difficulty in which he was placed, and his sense of the character of the people with whom he had to deal. Nothing can, more strikingly than this last act of their history, evince that the measure of their iniquity was indeed full to overflowing. So far from listening to Lot, they were enraged at his interference, and, after reviling him as an intermeddling stranger, attempted to lay hold of him, with the threat to deal worse with him than with his guests. It was now high time for the angels, whom Lot was entertaining unawares, to interfere by the exercise of the powers with which they were invested. As the mob pressed on, not only to seize Lot, but to break the door open, the angels opened it themselves, and pulling Lot into the house, shut it again. They then smote the brutal mob with distorted vision, whereby objects were presented so falsely or confusedly to their sight that they fancied they saw the door where it was not, and did not see it where it was: thus were baffled all their attempts to find the door, in which, unknowing what had befallen them, they madly persevered until they were wearied out. The angels then told Lot, that if he had any natural or acquired relatives in the town whose lives he wished to preserve, he must hasten to remove them with him from the place; "For," said they, making known their character and their avenging mission, "we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of JEHOVAH; and JEHOVAH hath sent us to destroy it." On this Lot went into the town to the men, to the husbands of his married daughters, to exhort them to flee with him from the doomed city. But they received

his communication and warning as an idle jest.

When the morning dawned, the angels hastened Lot to depart with his wife and two unmarried daughters, that they might not be consumed in the ruin which hovered over the guilty city. Lot appears to have been attached to a place in which he had lived so many years; probably he had much property to leave in it; and, above all, his married daughters were left there with their infatuated husbands. All these things made him linger as one reluctant to depart; and, perceiving this, the angels laid a gentle restraint upon them, taking them by their hands, and leading them forth beyond the city. One of them then charged the party to hasten for their lives, and not to make any stay in the plain, or even to look behind them, till they reached the mountains on the borders of the vale; from which it appeared that the Divine judgment was not to be confined to the town of Sodom, but that the other cities of the plain were to be involved in its doom. Lot looked forward, and seeing that the mountains to which he was directed to escape lay at a considerable distance, ventured to entreat to be excused from so far a flight on so urgent an occasion, and that the near town of Bela might be allowed him for a refuge. This request involved a desire that this town should be preserved, in excuse for which liberty, he pleaded the *smallness* of the place; whence, his request being granted, it was afterwards known by the name of Zoar [*small*]. This town being spared for his sake, he was directed to hasten thither; for that the impatience of the Divine indignation could not be appeased till he arrived there safely. So they hastened down the valley; and the sun had not yet risen when they entered Zoar. *Then* the destruction, sudden and overwhelming, came; and not only did it overthrow and devour the cities of the plain, and all the inhabitants, and the growth of the ground, and every living thing, but it cut off the Jordan in its course, and absorbed the very plain itself: the surface of which, once blooming like another Eden, no man has beheld since that day; but, instead thereof, a bitter, sulphureous, and fœtid lake, the Lake of Death, which has from that hour to this remained one of the wonders of the earth.

The examination of the agencies which it pleased God to employ in effecting this great overthrow, and the description of the existing Asphaltic Lake, are subjects which need not interrupt the present narrative. It suffices to mention, that when Abraham, who was probably roused by the shock and noise of this terrible convulsion, got up early that same morning, and hastened to the place where he had interceded with Jehovah, "he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Then he but too well knew that he had judged all too favourably of Sodom, when he had reckoned that at least ten righteous men might be inclosed within its walls. Although he had not expressly named Lot in his intercession, he doubtless now felt very anxious for him, as it could not yet be known to him that in this great destruction the Lord had remembered Abraham, and had delivered his nephew from the overthrow of the city in which he dwelt.

And yet all the party which left Sodom were not saved. The destruction, as we have said, commenced the instant that Lot entered Zoar; and his wife, who, too curiously or incredulously, lingered behind, regardless of the strict injunctions which had been given, suffered the dreadful consequences, by being involved in that destruction which extended to the very border of the city which had been given to Lot for his refuge. She was overwhelmed and smothered in the spray of the igneous and saline matters which filled the air; and which, gathering and hardening around her, left her incrusted body with some resemblance to a mass of rock-salt. Lot tarried not long in Zoar; but removed to the mountains to which he had at first been directed to escape. We are told that he was afraid to dwell there; but whether on account of the danger and annoyance from the unwholesome vapours and mephitic effluvia proceeding from

the combustion of the plain, or from the apprehension that the town would be swallowed up by the increase of the waters which were collecting in the basin of this inclosed plain, are alternatives left open to conjecture: but whatever moved him to it, the resource which he adopted was less out of the way, at that time and in that place, than it seems to us; seeing that probably it had been his yearly custom, while living in the vale of Siddim, to remove during the season of heat to the mountains, and to abide there in one of the cool caves they offered, perhaps in the very cave to which he now resorted. To live thus in caves during summer has ever been a favourite practice, wherever such caves are to be found, in this region; and if Lot had some property remaining, his condition was not so much altered but that it was as natural, or more natural, that he should take this usual course, than that he should go and claim the hospitality of his kinsman Abraham, which some needlessly wonder that he did not do. And that he had property is more than likely: not, indeed, as some preposterously conceive (from finding that he had wine in the cave), that he and his daughters had escaped from Sodom laden with provisions, wine, and other necessaries, but that his flocks and herds were out with his servants and shepherds, beyond the limits of the ruined plain; and their return to him afforded the means of obtaining from the townspeople whatever provisions or other goods he required.

In his caverned retreat a new and unexpected evil befel Lot. His daughters, like all eastern women, and especially all women of Bedouin parentage, looked upon the possession of children as the best and brightest hope of their existence; but they saw none on earth whom they might expect to marry. They knew not that any of their father's family and connections existed, to become their husbands; and the example of their sisters, who had perished in Sodom with their husbands, made them afraid, if willing, to entertain the notion of a marriage with Canaanitish husbands. They therefore most wickedly managed, on two successive nights, to intoxicate their father with wine, and in that condition, and without his clear knowledge of what was done, to procure issue by him. A son to each daughter was the result of this transaction. The eldest daughter gave to her son the name of Moab [*from a father*], and the younger called hers Ben-Ammi [*son of my people*], which latter name, intimating the mother's satisfaction in the fact that the child was a son of her own race, corroborates the view we have taken of the motives by which the women were influenced, and which seems to us far preferable to the notion that they supposed that all the inhabitants of the earth, except their father and themselves, were destroyed in the overthrow of Sodom. We do not see how it is possible that they could have entertained any such impression. Be this as it may, the sons which were born to them were the progenitors of the Moabites and Ammonites,—nations well known in a later age for their enmity to the house of Israel. Thus much of Lot, of whom the sacred history takes no further notice.

Not long after the destruction of Sodom, Abraham removed from the valley of Mamre, where he had lived so many years, and proceeded southward, towards the desert border of Palestine, and encamped* near a place called Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. What occasioned his removal at this particular juncture does not appear; but it has been with sufficient plausibility conjectured, that he could not bear the stench which at that time arose from the sulphureous lake where the cities of the plain had been.

This is the first time we read of any place called Gerar, which, it appears, lay in what was even then known as the land of the Philistines; or that any mention is made of a people of that name as occupying any part of the country. But they now were settled in the country of which Gerar was then the capital; for although the Abimelech who reigned at that place is only called "king of Gerar" on the present occasion, his successor, of the same title, who reigned there in the

* We say "encamped;" but as the text is that "he sojourned *in* Gerar," we do not feel assured but that he might at first have lived in the town, as Lot had lived in Sodom.

time of Isaac's manhood, is distinctly called "king of the Philistines." It thence results that the remarkable people of that name had already arrived in the country, seeking a settlement; and finding the settled people, whom, coming themselves from the south, they first met with in the land of Canaan, to be in possession of a fine and fertile territory, from which they deemed themselves strong enough to expel them, they made the attempt, and succeeded in it.

Abraham had not long been at Gerar before an incident occurred remarkably similar to that which had some years before happened in Egypt. Uncorrected by the experience he had then gained, and still tormented by the fears by which he had then been influenced, the patriarch gave out, on his arrival at this strange place, that Sarah was his sister. As, according to a still subsisting custom among the Bedouin nations, unmarried females go unveiled, while be-

[Woman Veiled.]

trothed and married women are heedful to screen their beauties from the eyes of strangers, Sarah was obliged to dispense with her matrimonial veil, the better to support the character of Abraham's sister. Hence she was the sooner seen by Abimelech, the king of Gerar, or by those who described her to him; and the consequence was, that he sent and took her to his harem. For this act, he and his household were smitten by the Lord as Pharaoh had before been smitten; and in a dream he learnt wherefore this infliction came upon him, namely, because he had taken away the wife of another man. In extenuation, Abimelech, who, as an oriental king, did not see any harm in taking away a man's sister without his or her consent, alleged his ignorance of the more intimate relation between them, and protested that in the integrity of his heart and the innocency of his hands he had done this. His anxious inquiry, "JEHOVAH, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?" possibly intimates an apprehension of some such avenging calamity as that by which the cities of the plain had been lately overthrown; while at the same time it manifests his knowledge of the true God by his peculiar name; and of Him, the answer of the heavenly vision leaves it unquestionable that Abimelech was a worshipper. His excuse was admitted; he was informed that Abraham was a prophet, at whose prayer, when his wife should be restored to him, the fatal malady by which the king's household was visited would be removed. The king gat up early in the morning, and told all this to his wondering servants. He then sent for Abraham, and remonstrated with him, rather impressively, for having concealed the true relationship between Sarah and himself. To this the patriarch could only allege his apprehension of being slain for her sake, in places where he supposed the fear of God did not exist; taking care to add, that he had not untruly stated the near connection by birth, although he had concealed the nearer ties which existed between them. Abimelech then made the patriarch liberal gifts of sheep and oxen, and men-servants and women-servants; and told him that he was at liberty to dwell in any part of the land which he pleased. On returning Sarah to her husband, the king took occasion to administer a very graceful reproof, telling her that he had given her "brother" a thousand shekels weight of silver, with which he might purchase for her such a veil as it became a married woman to wear *.

* Many different interpretations of Abimelech's speech

The joy, so long expected, and so long delayed, came at last; and at the date specially appointed by God, being exactly one year from the time that Abraham entertained the angels under the terebinth tree, Sarah gave birth to a son. To this son the name of Isaac was given, with a joyous feeling * which suggested to Sarah a more pleasant application of the name than in the circumstances which gave the first occasion for it. She nourished the infant from her own breast, probably not less than three years; and a great feast signalized the day on which the heir of the promises was weaned.

In consequence of the changes and modifications of feeling and expectation which the event quite naturally occasioned, the birth and growth of Isaac did not bring unmixed satisfaction to the family of Abraham. Sarah, a woman on the verge of old age, unexpectedly gratified with a son, naturally enough threw the whole force of her affections upon him, to the gradual neglect and ultimate dislike of Ishmael, to whom, as her actual blessing, she appears to have been considerably attached before her greater blessing in Isaac came. Of Hagar's feelings we know nothing positively, but from our previous knowledge of her, we can readily conclude that it was with no pleasant impressions that she saw the consequence of her own son, now growing up to manhood, much diminished, and many of his expectations superseded by the young stranger. The mind of the rough youth himself appears to have been somewhat irritated by the comparative neglect into which he had fallen; and he seems to have occasionally manifested unkind feelings towards the child by whom this had been unconsciously produced. The patriarch himself appears to have been the least altered of the three. The sturdy character of Ishmael was not likely to be displeasing to a pastoral chief; and while the heart of Abraham was large enough for both his sons, each of whom he was willing to see in the several stations which Providence had assigned them before their birth, it is probable that his first-born still possessed a higher place in his affections than the infant Isaac had yet won.

An occasion soon occurred on which the operation of these different feelings was manifested. At or not long after the great feast which Abraham made when Isaac was weaned, Ishmael grievously offended Sarah, probably not for the first time, by some derision or ill-treatment of the young heir, to which Hagar appears, in some way or other, to have been a party. The wrath of Sarah was warmly excited, and she passionately insisted to Abraham that Hagar and her son should both be sent away, declaring that "the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac;" which is probably levelled at some intention which Abraham was known to entertain of dividing his actual property between his sons, leaving to Isaac the heirship of those higher hopes which belonged to him. Such an intention was in itself so proper and customary, that in a later age it was applied to such cases by the law of Moses. The demand of Sarah was very grievous to the patriarch. But God, who on a former occasion interposed to prevent a separation, and obliged Hagar to return to the mistress from whom she had fled, now indicates his high approval of the course which the displeasure and passion of Sarah had suggested. This difference of procedure is evidently another instance of the operation of the divine intention of keeping the chosen race alone and apart from even collateral combinations. Yet He, who knew well the nature of those affections which He has implanted in man to bless and cheer his existence, gave not his sanction to this harsh requirement without words of kindness, followed by the renewed promise —"And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, *because he is thy seed.*"

To mark the alacrity of obedience which the patriarch ever manifested when his cause was indicated by a clear command from God, we are told that he "rose up early in the

to Sarah have been given, and after a careful examination of them all we adhere to this (which has already been given in the 'Pictorial Bible,' Gen. xx. 16) as the only one which appears to us to receive illustration from the ideas and usages of the east.

* See p. 53. *Now* Sarah says, "God hath made me to *laugh*, so that all that hear shall *laugh* with me."

morning" to set forward the bondwoman and her son upon their way. We are not told of the explanations and farewells which passed on this occasion; but it is preposterous to suppose there was anything harsh in this dismissal. We doubt not that Abraham's household knew that he was in the habit of receiving directions from God, by which his measures had been at all times directed; and that he had trained up all belonging to him into the habit of feeling that when such a direction had been received, nothing further remained to be considered. Abraham may or may not have told Hagar of Sarah's demand and her cause for it; but, questionless, he did tell her of the Divine command, of the necessity which it imposed upon him, and of the promise with which it was attended; and Hagar's own submission, on a former occasion, to a command from the same supreme authority, sufficiently intimates that she could not but feel the obligation of obedience under which her master lay. Furnished with a skin of water and with such provisions as travellers take with them, she departed with her son from the tents of her lord, and his father, and wandered in the desert of Beersheba. Here her supply of water was soon spent; and the young Ishmael, less inured than his mother to privations, grew faint from thirst and weariness, and seemed likely to perish in the deserts which were his promised heritage. There was no remedy but water; and water his mother saw none, and expected not to find there. The case was hopeless in her eyes. That the lad might not die in her sight, she laid him down under the shade of one of the desert shrubs, and withdrawing herself to some distance, she sat down upon the ground and wept aloud. The moans of the child and the cries of his mother were not unheard in heaven; and the pitying voice of the angel of God called to her, saying, "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation." The attention was thus guided to a distant well, to which she hastened to fill her vessel, and returned to give the lad drink. All was well with them then. They soon after met with a party of Bedouin pastors to whom they joined themselves, and remaining in the deserts, Ishmael soon distinguished himself by the expert use of the favourite weapon of that early age, the bow—he "became an archer," and acquired a character in conformity with that which the Divine predictions had assigned to him. In the east the mother usually takes all but the entire direction in the marriage of her son; and, agreeably to this usage, as soon as Ishmael became of proper age, Hagar procured a wife for Ishmael out of the land of Egypt, to which she herself belonged. We may now leave them and return to the tents of Abraham.

The special and marked interference of Providence to protect the sanctities of Abraham's tent made a profound impression on the king of Gerar; and this was not weakened when he noticed the growing power and wealth of the patriarch, and how all things prospered with him: and now, after several years, seeing that Abraham seemed disposed to remain in his country, he deemed it prudent to enter into a formal alliance of amity with him. Reverting to the recent expulsion of the Avim from this country by his own people, he was probably not without fear that the Hebrew clan might ultimately become powerful enough, and if so, might probably not want the inclination, to expel them in their turn. Hence, perhaps, the careful terms in which this, the first treaty on record, was couched. Abimelech, attended by Phichol, the chief captain of his host, proceeded to Abraham's camp, and thus addressed him:—"God is with thee in all that thou doest. Now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely *with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son;* but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do *unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.*" The remarkable brevity of this first of treaties, while it is precise even to redundance, combined with its fine comprehensive character, renders it really inimitable. Its reliance upon the common sense and common honesty of men is also beautiful. It merely

states the principle of an engagement—"thou wilt not deal falsely with me,"—and thus expresses a healthy and refreshing confidence that men would *interpret* rightly the particular acts in which false dealing might seem to be involved. Thus worthily does the first chapter in the history of human treaties open.

Abraham readily consented to enter into this engagement; but, before doing so, took the opportunity of seeking of Abimelech an explanation and clear understanding on a matter of infinite concernment to himself, and by which his rights as a pastoral chief were very seriously affected. To dig a well is, unless under very peculiar circumstances, the most arduous and important work which a person in such situations undertakes: and the benefits of such a work are so highly appreciated, that the property of it becomes vested in the person by whom it was dug and in his heirs for ever. While his clan are encamped near it, no parties not belonging to him can draw its waters without his leave. As we are getting into much mention of wells of water, it is desirable that this law on the subject should be clearly understood, as it tends to throw some light on subsequent transactions and disputes.

Now Abraham had dug a well near his encampment; and of the use of this the "servants" (probably the herdsmen) of Abimelech had violently deprived him. As men seldom act without some reason, or show of reason, which is deemed satisfactory to themselves, it may seem likely that Abimelech's people doubted the right of Abraham to apply the law of the desert to the common lands of an appropriated territory, and to claim the exclusive possession of the well he had dug in such land. If their view had been just, however, it could only have entitled them to a share of the water, and not have justified them in assuming that exclusive possession which they denied to the party at whose expense the benefit had been secured. But taking into account some transactions of rather later date, we incline to think that the cause of all the differences about wells which we read of in the history of Abraham and of Isaac, lay deeper than this account supposes, and must be sought in a country more similarly circumstanced than the open deserts to that in which the patriarch was at this time sojourning. The best analogy is offered by Persia. There all waste land—that is, all lands which are uncultivable from wanting the means of irrigation—are called "God's lands;" and although the king is regarded as the general proprietor of the soil, such lands are free for any uses to which they can be applied; and whoever procures the means of irrigation, becomes the proprietor of the land which he thus renders cultivable. Now, as among the immemorially ancient usages of the east, none are more ancient than those which relate to the occupation of land, it is not too much to suppose that a similar usage to this existed in the time of Abraham; and, if so, it is easy to conclude that the anxiety of the Philistines about the wells dug by Abraham arose from the apprehension that, by the formation of such wells, he would be understood to create a lien in the lands in which they lay, and would acquire an indefeasible right of occupation or rather of possession; and it might seem to them inconvenient that so powerful a clan should acquire such a right in the soil of so small a territory as that which belonged to them. Hence also their care, when Abraham afterwards left their part of the country, to fill up the wells which he had dug; and hence also the renewed and more bitter strife with Isaac when he, on arriving there, proceeded to clear out these wells and to dig new ones himself. That Isaac also pursued cultivation to some extent in the lands for which he had thus secured the means of irrigation, is a remarkable corroboration of the view we now take; as he certainly might in this way, but we know not how he could otherwise, acquire such a proprietary right as could alone entitle him to cultivate the soil.

Abimelech, in reply to the complaint of Abraham respecting the well, declared that the conduct of his servants had not been sanctioned by him, and that, indeed, this was the first time he had heard anything of the matter; and he made no objection to the

proposal of Abraham, that the recognition of his (the patriarch's) right to the well should form a part of the proposed covenant. This proposal, thus represented as the sole matter for which Abraham himself took care to provide in a solemn engagement with the king of the Philistines, is, perhaps, as striking an indication of the supreme importance of water in those eastern countries as can anywhere be found. Both parties then swore to the covenant, the terms of which have thus been stated; and as a memorial of the transaction, and in particular of his acknowledged right to the well, the patriarch gave to the place the name of Beer-sheba—*the Well of the Oath*. This imposition of commemorative names upon places was the principle of various methods which were resorted to in these earliest ages, to perpetuate the memory of events and contracts, in the absence of those written documents which were afterwards found more suitable for such purposes. We shall observe this often as we proceed.

The convenience of the situation to one having large possessions in cattle, together with the good understanding between him and the king, induced Abraham to remain many years at Beer-sheba*; and contemplating that, unless God otherwise determined, he should be likely to spend the remainder of his days in that place, he planted a grove of trees, and built under their shade an altar, at which he might with his household worship God. Such an oratory as this—the noblest and most beautiful of any—gives the first recorded instance of a place set apart for religious service. This, and most of the other patriarchal practices and ideas concerning trees, survived to a long subsequent age among the Druids of our own country; and in their peculiar regard for the oak the Hebrew patriarchs went very far with them. Disregarding the abominations and corruptions which ultimately became connected with this and all other religious appropriations, let us acknowledge that when the fathers of the world sought for whatever was most noble and beautiful on earth, that they might connect it with their more fixed worship of God, and made choice of trees for that purpose, they decided under the full influence of the simpler, and—on account of their simplicity—the finer impulses of our nature. In the love of the patriarchs for trees, there is a feeling for something more than the gratefulness of their shade,—something which, in the view of many, gives to their character an understandable point by which a respect and sympathy is secured for them, which even their virtues might not win: for we know that none but a good man *can* truly love a tree, and none but a pure mind can remain open to that peculiar class of impressions which only the presence of a tree can make.

The Jewish doctors count up ten trials of Abraham's faith and obedience†. Nine of these we have told. The tenth and last was of all these the most terrible, and from which, proportionably, the character of the patriarch came forth with the greater splendour—with the resplendence of gold refined in many fires. He had dwelt many years in Beer-sheba, and his son Isaac had reached the age of twenty-five years, when the astounding command came, that he was to immolate this son—the heir of the promises—as a sacrifice to Jehovah. It being the design of God to render the patriarch an eminent example to all his future posterity of unquestioning obedience, whereby he might worthily claim the title of "The Father of the Faithful," every circumstance was accumulated which seemed calculated to render obedience more difficult to him. Even in the requirement itself, the proposed victim is indicated by a variety of tender appellations, rising in their value by an admirable climax from the first to the last, every one of which must have entered like iron into the soul of the patriarch: "Take now *thy son*, thine *only son* ISAAC, whom *thou lovest*—and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon

* He was there twenty-six years, according to the Jews.

† 1. In quitting his native country, Chaldea; 2, his flight to Egypt from famine in Canaan; 3, the first seizure of Sarah, in Egypt; 4, the war for the rescue of Lot; 5, his taking Hagar to gratify Sarah; 6, his circumcision; 7, the second seizure of Sarah in Gerar; 8, the expulsion of Ishmael; 9, the expulsion of Hagar; 10, the sacrifice of Isaac. *Holes.*

one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

We do not imagine that the idea of a father sacrificing his son to God as a burnt-offering was new to Abraham. In after times we know it was but too common; and it appears probable that in those times which lie beyond the reach of our knowledge, the notion had crept in, that as the life of a son, and especially of the eldest, the only, or of a very dear son, was the most valuable and precious offering in their power to present, it must needs be the most acceptable and meritorious in the eyes of the gods they worshipped. Hence, as the most sensible of the Jewish writers conjecture*, Abraham understood that this highest sacrifice, by which, as he knew, the heathen manifested their zeal for their false gods, was required of him as a test of his zeal for the true God. But how he could reconcile such a command with the promise of a numerous posterity through this very Isaac might not appear very evident, did we not learn from the New Testament†, that so confident did he feel that this promise would and must be accomplished, that he believed that God would restore Isaac again to life after he was sacrificed. Curbing, therefore, the force of his paternal emotions, he, with the usual alacrity of his obedience, "rose up early in the morning," and made the necessary preparations for the journey and for the sacrifice, directing the ass on which he usually rode to be saddled, and the wood required for a burnt-offering to be cleaved. He then departed with Isaac, attended by two of his young men. On the third day they arrived within a distant view of the place which God had appointed for this awful act; and it proved to be that Mount Moriah on which, in after ages, the temple of Solomon was built; and this site was probably selected with a prospective reference to that circumstance, as well as to the mysteries of which the neighbourhood was to be the scene in ages to come.

Here, while the place was still some way off, Abraham alighted from his ass, and fearing lest the young men might be disposed to interfere, or, perhaps, apprehending that the act which he was about to execute might, through such witnesses, be drawn into a precedent, he directed them to remain there with the ass, while he and Isaac went yonder to worship. The father and son passed on in silence, Isaac bearing the wood which, unknown to him, was destined to consume his own body, and Abraham taking the knife and a vessel containing the fire with which the wood was to be kindled. As they thus proceeded, it occurred to Isaac to ask the natural but, under the circumstances, very trying question,—"My father, ... Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" To this Abraham only answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." But as they proceeded, or when they arrived at the top of the hill, the patriarch must have explained to his son that he was himself the victim which God had provided; and that the pious and dutiful youth then bowed in submission to the will of God and the desire of his father is evinced by the circumstances: for any act of compulsion was morally impossible by an old man of one hundred and twenty-five years upon a vigorous youth of twenty-five years, whose strength is evinced by his ability to carry all the wood required for such a sacrifice; and his submission must have been founded on the conviction that his father was right in that which he was doing. The altar was built; the wood was disposed properly upon it; Isaac laid himself down upon the wood; and lest the weakness of the flesh should shrink in this fiery trial, he submitted to be bound: and then the patriarch—with feelings which a fond father can understand without any description, and which none else would understand if described—lifted up his hand to smite the life which was doubtless far more precious to him than his own. The trial was complete. The uplifted arm was arrested, and the intense feelings of that solemn moment were calmed in an instant by a most welcome voice from heaven, which cried:—"Abraham! Abraham! .... lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: *for* NOW *I* KNOW *that thou fearest God, seeing that thou*

* Philo, for instance. † Heb. xi. 19.

hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me." And as the patriarch heard these words, his eyes fell upon a ram which had been caught in a thicket by its horns, and joyfully recognising in this the victim which God *had provided* for a burnt-offering, he hastened to offer it on the altar in the place of his son Isaac; and never, surely, from the beginning of the world till now, was a religious act performed with such released feelings as those which attended this sacrifice. In memory of this event, and with a happy allusion to his own ambiguous answer to the question of Isaac, as well as to its most unexpected accomplishment, he called the name of that place JAHOH JIREH *, —*the Lord will provide.*

This act of perfect obedience being consummated, it pleased God to reward the faith he had thus proved, and not found wanting, by the renewal of all his former promises, in terms so express and so strong, and confirmed by the highest of all possible sanctions—"By MYSELF have I sworn,"—that the patriarch could not but receive it as a firm and settled matter; and hence it does not appear that any further promise was made to him during the remainder of his life. Cheered by this promise, Abraham returned happily to Beersheba with his son, whom he had, as it were, received again from the dead, and who must now have become all the dearer to him, for the signal proof he had given of his pious resignation and filial piety.

After this twelve years passed away, during which we only know that Abraham received news from Mesopotamia, informing him that the family of his brother, Nahor, was in a flourishing condition, and that he had many children, and some grand-children. During this time, it appears, also, that Abraham removed his camp from Beersheba to his old station in the valley of Mamre, or at least to some place near Hebron. Here, at the end of the twelve years, Sarah died, at the age of 127 years; and it is remarkable that she is the only woman whose age, at the time of death, is mentioned in the Scripture. At this time, and probably from the time of her becoming a mother, Sarah occupied a separate tent from that of her husband †. And now, when her death was announced to him, he left his own tent, and sat down at the door of hers, "to weep for her," this being the mode of proceeding which custom required.

The death of Sarah raised a new question, which hitherto there had been no occasion to consider. It has been an ancient custom among the Bedouin tribes, not to bury their dead just where they happen to die, but to have a burial-place within their respective territories, to which they bring the bodies of such of the tribe as die within its district. In conformity with this custom, Abraham now wanted a suitable burial-ground, appropriated to the special use of his family, and in which the remains of all of that family who died in the land of Canaan might be laid. He therefore applied to the Hittites, dwelling in Hebron, to obtain the permanent grant of a piece of ground proper for this purpose. The account of the interview is curious and interesting, from the light it throws upon the position of Abraham and the manners of the time. The wealthy and powerful patriarch appears to have been popular with the Hittites, or was rather, perhaps, regarded by them as one whom it was their interest to oblige. He was received with great attention and respect, and when his wish was understood, the choice of all their sepulchres in which to bury his dead was readily and freely offered to him. On this the good patriarch rose up and bowed to the children of Heth, and then proceeded to explain more clearly the object he had in view. He wanted a family burial-place for a permanent possession; and there was a field, called Machpelah, well planted with trees, and with a good cave at the end of it, which would exceedingly well answer his purpose, if the owner, one Ephron, then present, could be induced to sell this property to him. This person, without waiting to be pressed, readily, and with much tact, answered for himself:—"Nay, my lord, hear me: the field *give I*

* Dr. Hales, whose view of this transaction we have much followed in the preceding paragraphs, considers that JAHOH is, probably more nearly than JEHOVAH, the true reading of the awful name of God.

† This is shown by Gen. xxiv. 67.

thee, and the cave that is therein, *I give it* thee; in the presence of the sons of my people [as witnesses] *give I it thee:* bury thy dead." Now this looks very fair; but the readiness of the man, the tone of the whole speech, with the parade of "give—give—give," so much reminds us of certain passages in our own oriental experience, that Ephron and his speech find no favour in our eyes. We are convinced that, with all this apparent generosity, the man had a keen eye to his own interests, and saw clearly that it might be a more profitable thing to lay the emir under an obligation, than to sell him the ground outright. Besides, if Abraham was, as seems to be the case, a much more important person than Ephron himself, he could not have received this land as a present, according to the usages of the east, without making a more considerable present in return. It seems to us that Abraham quite understood all this. He rose, and, after bowing generally to the congregation, addressed himself particularly to Ephron, and insisted on paying for the field with money; and this person, seeing him resolute, at last named the price. "The land is worth four hundred shekels (weight) of silver;" but still, in exact conformity with the character we have assigned him, he takes care to add,—"What is that betwixt me and thee?" As he had thus been brought to name a sum in the presence of so many witnesses, Abraham immediately weighed out the quantity of silver he required; and thus closed the bargain, with a degree of address, which shows that he was a judge of character, and knew how to deal with such persons as Ephron. The act of purchase included a specification of the property thus transferred, so precise and lawyer-like, as to make this primitive deed of conveyance a perfect model of its kind*; whilst it seems to intimate that the patriarch felt the necessity of precision in dealing with a person of Ephron's character. Thus was acquired the first possession of the Hebrew race in the land of Canaan—that possession a sepulchre.

There is not in the east any grief like the grief of a mother for her son, or of a son for his mother; and there were circumstances calculated to give peculiar intensity to the mutual attachment of Sarah and Isaac. The grief for the loss of his mother, acting upon the quiet and passive character of Isaac, must have been very strong; and it was probably the sense of privation and continued distress which he manifested, that put it into the mind of Abraham, about three years after Sarah's death, of providing a wife for his son, who was then about forty years of age. In meditating such an object, a Bedouin chief would naturally first think of keeping up the family connection, by seeking for his son a wife from the household of his brother; and, in fact, the young man is held to have the first claim to the hand of any female which the house of his uncle will supply. To the influence of such feelings was, in the case of Abraham, added an anxiety to keep pure and unmixed the race which God had chosen. This explains the strong interest which Abraham and the other patriarchs took in providing wives for their sons from among their own connections. On the present occasion, Abraham called his trusty old servant, Eliezer of Damascus, and made him take a solemn oath to go to the family of his brother Nahor, in Mesopotamia, and bring thence a wife for Isaac, if one willing to come could be found there; giving him entire authority to conclude the marriage—which, in itself, is a remarkable illustration of the ideas on which oriental marriages are usually concluded.

Eliezer departed with a train suitable to the importance of his mission, and calculated to impress a proper notion of his master's consequence upon those to whom he was going — consisting of ten camels, with a proper proportion of attendants, and with valuable presents for the damsel and her friends; it being then, as now, the custom of the east to purchase the bride from her friends at a high price, as well as to make

* "The field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession, in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city." Gen. xxiii. 17, 18.

presents to herself, instead of the bride bringing a dowry to her husband.

It would seem that Nahor's family still lived in the town (Charran) where Abraham left it. Like Lot in Sodom, they lived in a house—and, so far, had relinquished the character of the pure pastoral nomades who dwell in tents, although the flocks were still sent out to distant pastures under the care of the younger branches of the family, and of shepherds, whose mode of life was like that of the Bedouins. Or, which is as likely, if not more so, the head establishment lived in a house only from the latter end of autumn to the spring, spending the rest of the year in tents—a practice which still prevails among some of the pastoral tribes of Western Asia.

How many days Eliezer's journey took we know not: but it was towards evening when he arrived in the vicinity of his place of destination. His intimate acquaintance with Bedouin habits then suggested to him the measures which seemed best calculated to ensure the object of his journey. In that age, as now, the duty of drawing water from the wells devolved upon the young women of every Bedouin household; and the sheikh's own daughter is not above taking her share in a service which is not by any means considered degrading, — so much otherwise, indeed, that the young women find much employment in meeting at the well, and talking together of their small affairs. When Eliezer reached the well, the time of the evening had nearly arrived at which the females are wont to come forth to draw water; and he knew that among them he might expect to see the destined bride of his young master. He therefore allowed his camels to kneel down, in their usual posture of rest, resolving to remain there, as one who tarried for leave to give water to them from that well. While thus waiting, he prayed to the God of his master Abraham to give him good speed that day; and, being deeply impressed with the responsibility of the duty he had undertaken, he ventured to propose a sign whereby the kindness of her disposition should be made to indicate the female appointed to be the wife of Isaac. He was yet speaking, when the young women came to discharge their evening duty. To one of them his attention was particularly drawn, by her great beauty; and as she was returning from the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder, he ran to meet her, with the request that she would allow him to take a draught of water from her vessel. She said, "Drink, my lord;" and, with the utmost alacrity, lowered her pitcher from her shoulder to her hand, to give him drink. When he had finished, she hastened again and again to the well, emptying her pitcher into the trough, to give the camels water; while the admiring stranger pondered in his mind whether this, being the sign he had required, did not sufficiently indicate the future bride of his master's son. To assist his conclusions, he took from his treasures a nose-jewel and a pair of bracelets, both of gold, and presented to her, asking, at the same time, whose daughter she was, and whether her father's house afforded room where his party might lodge. To his great joy, her answer proved her to be the very woman of whom Abraham had already heard in Canaan—namely, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, one of the sons of Nahor. She also told him, not only that there was room for his party, but also chopped straw and corn for the camels. The good old servant now convinced that he had found the right person, bowed his head, and blessed, aloud, the God of Abraham, who had thus led him to the house of his master's brethren. No sooner had these words fallen from him, than Rebekah ran home to tell all this to her friends.

All this time Nahor does not seem to have been alive—at least his name does not appear in any part of this transaction; and although Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, still lived, the management of all affairs appears to have fallen into the hands of his son—the keen and active Laban,—who no sooner caught the meaning of his sister's hurried statement, and saw (as the narrative is careful to add) the valuable presents which had been given to her, than he hurried forth, and warmly invited Eliezer into the house. There, with the usual prompti-

tude of eastern hospitality, a meal was ready for him and his companions by the time they had attended to their camels and washed their feet. But the faithful servant was too much interested in the result of his mission to sit down and eat before he had declared his errand. This he did in a precise and simple narrative of what has already been related,—in which, however, he, with much address, was mindful to let his audience know of Abraham's great wealth, and of the prosperity with which he had been favoured. So Laban, in his own name, and that of Bethuel, delared that the visible traces of Divine direction in this matter left them without an answer; and then, without taking the trouble to consult Rebekah, added,—"Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." On this the overjoyed steward bowed his head in thanks to God. Then he drew from his store of precious things, ornaments of gold and silver, and costly garments, and gave them to the elected bride; and also to her brother and mother he made the valuable presents which they were entitled to expect. The next morning Eliezer rose early, and, rather unexpectedly, required permission to return to his master with the bride. They wished him to tarry a few days; but as he persisted, and Rebekah professed her willingness to go at once, no further opposition was made.

Women in the east consume but little time in preparing for even an extensive journey; and Rebekah, being soon ready, was dismissed by Laban with the very cha-

[Women on Camels.]

racteristic oriental blessing,—"Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." The nurse is a very respectable and influential personage in an eastern household, and often accompanies the young female she has nourished to the new home which marriage gives her, and where she becomes her chief adviser and confidant. So now, Rebekah's nurse and some of her damsels were sent with her. They were mounted on camels, and departed, Eliezer and his men leading the way.

It was eventide when the party arrived in the neighbourhood of Abraham's camp; and the contemplative Isaac had walked forth into the fields to meditate, and was the first to discover the advancing camels. He walked on to meet them; and his destined bride, observing him approach, asked Eliezer who he was; and hearing the answer,—"It is my master,"—she dis-

mounted from the camel, and enveloped herself in the veil of a bride,—by which Isaac might distinguish her from the others, and would know that the mission of his servant had not been unavailing. Having learnt from Eliezer all that had taken place, Isaac took Rebekah to the tent of his mother, Sarah, which belonged to her as the chief woman of the tribe. He loved her, and she became his wife. Then, first, he began to feel comfort since his mother's death.

All the circumstances of this expedition are, like others in the patriarchal history, eminently illustrative of the condition of life to which they belong; and they abound with such strong and finely-discriminated traits of character and natural feeling, that the writer who wishes to leave upon the mind of the reader distinct and characteristic impressions of the ages and the conditions of life through which his history leads, may well be reluctant to submit the details which lie before him to the curtailment and condensation which his limitations may require.

Soon after Isaac's marriage, Abraham, remembering that he was to be "the father of *many* nations," took to himself a second wife, Keturah, who was probably one, perhaps the chief, of the handmaids who had been "born in his house, or bought with his money." By her he had six sons, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah; all of whom before his own death, thirty-seven years after, he sent with suitable allowances into the country east and south-east of the Promised Land, where they became the founders of Arabian tribes, some of which are often noticed in the Jewish annals, and some remaining traces of whose names may to this day be discovered in Arabia. Thus Abraham disposed of his sons by Keturah in his own lifetime, lest at his death they should be disposed to interfere with the superior claims of Isaac, and, probably, lest any of them should settle in the land of Canaan, which was that son's destined heritage.

While thus Abraham was becoming the father of many nations, the beautiful wife of Isaac proved to be barren. "Of all the patriarchs," says Bishop Hall, "none made so little noise in the world as Isaac; none lived either so privately or so innocently: neither know I whether he approved himself a better son or a husband; for the one, he gave himself over to the knife of his father, and mourned three years for his mother; for the other, he sought not to any handmaid's bed, but in a chaste forbearance reserved himself for twenty years' space and prayed. Rebekah was so long barren."* After this she conceived, and brought forth twins, whose fortunes were predicted before their birth; for their struggles, as if for superiority, in her womb, engaged her attention, and she entreated God to show her what this might mean. The answer was, that two nations, two manners of people, were in her womb; and that of these the one people should be stronger than the other, and the elder should serve the younger. When they came into the world, the first-born exhibited a very hairy appearance, on which account the name of Esau [*hairy*] was given to him†, the other had hold of his brother's heel in the birth, and received the name of Jacob [*heel*] from that circumstance. Characteristic instances, these, of the manner in which, as now, among the Bedouin tribes, names were imposed upon children with reference to any unusual appearance they exhibited, or any little incident that occurred at the time of their birth.

Nothing further is recorded of Abraham till he died (B.C. 1978), at the age of 175 years, "an old man, and full of years." His body was deposited beside that of Sarah in the cave of Machpelah, which he had bought of Ephron the Hittite; and it is very interesting to note that the wild son of Hagar united amicably with the placid Isaac in rendering the last of duties to their common father; and as the act of burial in the east very speedily follows death, this leaves us to infer that Ishmael had been summoned from the desert to receive the dying blessing of the patriarch.

As this is the last occasion in which

* 'Contemplations,' Book iii. cant. 1.

† The name *Esau* is most generally applied to him personally; but his descendants are always invariably called *Edomites*, from his other name.

Ishmael is personally produced by the sacred historian, he takes the opportunity of stating as much of his further history as the objects of his narrative required. It amounts to this, that the son of Hagar was the father of twelve sons, who were the founders of as many tribes, which took their names, and which abode in the northern parts of Arabia, and on the borders of Egypt, Syria, and the Euphrates. That these tribes did not *all* take to the nomade life, and dwell in tents, appears from the mention of their "towns and castles." Ishmael himself died at the age of 137, "in the presence of all his brethren." The Jewish writers have claimed for him the distinction of being the founder of the Arabian nation. But there were Arabians before Ishmael; and the amount of his claim is doubtless that which the Scripture allows him—that he was the father of twelve Arabian tribes, and forms but one of the chief stocks from which the Arabian nation is descended.

Esau and Jacob were fifteen years of age when their grandfather Abraham died. As the lads grew up, they manifested characters as different as those of Ishmael and Isaac had been. Esau was the Ishmael of this generation, but Jacob was not the Isaac. Esau cared little for the more quiet and inactive duties of pastoral life, but he was abroad in the open country, where his careless and impulsive character found a congenial, because active and excitable, employment in hunting and shooting down with his arrows the gazelles and other wild animals which that region offered. Jacob, on the other hand, was a plain and quiet man, not taking any interest in such hunting excursions as those of his brother, but remaining for the most part at home among the tents, and acquiring much knowledge of the shepherd's unostentatious and humble duties. The character of Esau, rather than that of Jacob, is the one in which a Bedouin father is most likely to take pride; and hence it is no wonder that Isaac had much more regard for Esau than for his brother, the more, perhaps, as the former was enabled to show his father frequent and acceptable marks of his affection and respect by bringing for his eating the more choice game that he had killed. Isaac was also willing to regard his first-born as the heir of the promises; for although we see no reason to agree with those who think that Rebekah did or could conceal from him the communication concerning them which she had received from God before their birth, yet that communication, as interpreted with the bias of his affection for Esau, might not seem to him very clearly to establish the Divine intention to assign to his youngest son the same preference which he had himself obtained over Ishmael. But this intention seemed very clear to Rebekah herself, who interpreted the Lord's answer to her by the light of her own affection for Jacob. He was *her* favourite. She proved a somewhat crafty and unscrupulous woman, and Jacob's natural disposition, till he got advanced in years, lay rather in the same direction; and, besides this bond of sympathy between them, his more gentle and congenial character, together with his being more constantly at home, naturally recommended him to a higher place in his mother's affection than that which the more boisterous and careless Esau occupied. Jacob knew from his mother the superior destiny which awaited him; and, at her suggestion, kept himself on the watch for an opportunity of getting from Esau a formal transfer or relinquishment of the higher natural claims which he might be supposed to derive from the accident of a few minutes' earlier birth. Such an opportunity was not long wanting.

Jacob was one day preparing a savoury pottage of lentiles, which, or the mode of preparing which, was a novelty in that part of the country, having been lately introduced from Egypt*. While he was thus occupied,

* We obtain this conclusion from the circumstance that the mess was manifestly strange to Esau, and, by reason of that strangeness, appeared to him the greater delicacy,—compared with the fact on which Austin founds his conclusion that they were Egyptian lentiles, namely, that Egypt was famous for the lentile, and the preparation of it. It had two sorts, one darker than the other, and both greatly prized by the ancients. How common and favourite a dish lentile pottage was, appears from the ancient paintings of that country, which represent persons engaged in preparing it over a fire. August. in Ps. xlvi.; Plin. Hist. Nat. l. xviii. c. 31; Wilkinson, vol. ii. No. 277, fig. 9.

Esau came in from a severe day's hunting, famishing with hunger and faint from fatigue. Under such circumstances the coarsest fare would have seemed pleasing to him; but the savoury smell and tempting reddish appearance of the pottage was absolutely enchanting. The uncivilised or semi-civilised man is a child in his appetites at all times; and the hunger of such a man is a madness. Jacob was too sharp a youth not to know this, and he did not over-estimate the importance of his pottage when, on Esau's begging passionately for a share of "that red—that red"* (not knowing its name), he demanded his birthright as the price of the indulgence. We incline to think that he had before been teased on this point, at less favourable moments, and had resisted; but now he was in the state of one who would deem all prospective benefits and privileges cheap, in comparison with the present good of a cup of cold water. He therefore exclaimed fretfully,—"Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall *this birthright* do to me?" Seeing his brother so ready to take the bait, Jacob was not content with a mere off-hand agreement, but to make the bargain secure would not part with his pottage till it was confirmed by oath; Esau then got his mess; and surely "there was never any meat, except the forbidden fruit, bought so dear as this broth of Jacob."†

This transaction has raised much inquiry concerning the nature of those privileges—the birthright—which Jacob coveted so highly, and which Esau so lightly bartered away. Taking the question generally, the privilege of the firstborn seems to have been that he became the acknowledged chief or head of the tribe or clan, and in that character (but some dispute this) was its authorised priest and sacrificer, and that he had a title to the first consideration in the last blessing of the father, and to a portion of the inheritance twice as large as that which any of the other sons received. So much generally; but in the particular instance, there were other privileges which were then supposed to be annexed to primogeniture, but which did not ultimately prove to be so: these were, the promised Divine care and blessing on the chosen race, the inheritance of the land of Canaan, and the instrumentality of bringing a blessing upon all the families of the earth. Now the question is, whether it was the temporal or spiritual heritage, or both, the transfer of which Jacob obtained from his brother, and this is a question beset with considerable difficulties. Upon the whole we are inclined to free Jacob and his mother from the suspicion of mercenary motives, and to consider that they regarded only the spiritual heritage—the heirship of the promises—as being intended for Jacob; and that of this only they wished Esau to relinquish any claim which he might be supposed to derive from the priority of his birth. We can easily understand how such a man as Esau might "despise" *this* birthright, and ask contemptuously what good it would do him; but even he was probably not insensible to the benefit of a double share in Isaac's rich possessions.

About this time, or soon after, there was a famine in the land of Canaan; and Isaac appears to have had some thought of going down into Egypt, as his father had done before. But the Lord appeared to him, and forbade him to go thither, or to leave the country which, for Abraham's sake, had become the destined heritage of his seed; and, on this occasion, all the promises made to his father were renewed to him in terms very full and distinct. He then went to Gerar, where another Abimelech than he who made the covenant with Abraham reigned, and another Phichol was captain of the host. These were evidently not proper names, but the official titles which the kings and military commanders of the Philistines bore. While Isaac tarried here, an adventure occurred remarkably similar to that which his father had met with in the same place, in consequence of his denial that Sarah was his wife. Indeed, the circumstances which happened to Abraham in Egypt, to the same person in Gerar, and to Isaac also in that

* Hence he got for a name the word he had used, *Edom*, (red).

† Bishop Hall.

place, have so much resemblance, and are, in themselves, so unlikely to have occurred to the same persons, that were one authorized to judge the book of Genesis by the common rules of historical criticism, he might be inclined to think that the compiler of the book, having before him three different accounts of the same transaction, was led, from the differing circumstances which he found in them, to consider that the statements referred to three different transactions instead of one. As, however, this explanation is not admissible, we proceed to observe that although Isaac, like his father before him, gave out that his wife was his sister, she was not taken from him, nor was he molested on her account; but when the king accidentally discovered that Rebekah was really Isaac's wife, he sent for him and charged him with this disguise. He made just the same excuse as his father; and the king, after pointing out the danger which might have ensued, gave strict charge to his people, declaring that "he that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death,"—a rather superfluous injunction, *we* should think, but, in fact, curiously illustrative of the ideas of the Orientals and their attitude towards foreigners. This also will be noted as the first instance in history of a king holding the power of life and death.

Isaac remained a long time in this neighbourhood; and, after a while, he began to pay some attention to agriculture, being probably induced thereto by some existing scarcity, or the apprehension of one approaching, and the virgin soil rewarded him that same year a hundredfold. Here, in every way, Isaac prospered very greatly,—or, in the cumulative language of Scripture, "The Lord blessed him: and the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants."* This great prosperity excited the envy of the Philistines, and they were especially jealous of his operations in husbandry, for the reasons which we have lately had occasion to state†. They therefore hastened to fill up with earth the wells which had been dug by his father, and on which Isaac's own claim to conduct such operations rested; and, to crown all, the king himself desired the patriarch to remove himself to a greater distance, as his people could not bear to see a stranger thriving better than themselves upon their own soil.

For the sake of peace, Isaac accordingly departed, and naturally thought of resorting to the wells which Abraham had digged in the remoter parts of that territory. He found that these had already been filled up by the Philistines after the death of Abraham, and he proceeded to clear them out, and to restore to them the names by which his father had called them. He does not appear to have been interfered with in these operations. But when he proceeded to dig new wells the case was changed. His people, digging in the valley of Gerar, found a fine spring of water, and proceeded to form a well; but a warm dispute arose about it between his shepherds and those of Abimelech, the latter declaring the water to be theirs: on which Isaac, ever disposed to peace, gave it up to them, after imposing upon it the opprobrious name of Ezek [*contention*]. Proceeding farther, he dug another well: but about this the same strifes arose with the same result; and the patriarch left upon this well the name of Sitnah [*hatred*]. About the next and remoter well which his people digged there was no strife, and he gave it the name of Rehoboth [*room*]: "For now," said he, "the Lord hath made *room* for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Having thus provided a well—for his cattle were sent to pasture in this district—he removed his head-quarters to Beersheba, where he had himself been born, and which was, in his later years, the favourite station of his father.

On the night of his arrival at that old and honoured station, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, or vision, and conveyed to him the highest possible comfort and encouragement, in the words, "Fear not, FOR *I am with thee;*" and then renewed his promise to him —to bless him, and to multiply his seed for Abraham's sake. Then Isaac built an altar there, and worshipped the Lord; and his

* Gen. xxvi. 12—14. † Ante, page 48.

purpose being confirmed to remain for some time among the scenes of his boyhood, he proceeded to establish his camp, and to dig a well—or, more probably, to clear out that which his father had digged there.

Abimelech reflected that Isaac had not been very kindly treated by himself, and that his conduct had encouraged the harshness of his servants, by which the patriarch had been obliged to make this more distant removal; and, apprehending that he might harbour feelings of resentment on this account, he determined to go to him and renew the covenant of peace which their fathers had made. So he went, accompanied by Ahuzzath, his friend, and by Phichol, the commander of his forces. Isaac, to make them feel that he was sensible of the injuries he had received, gave them but a cool reception; but, nevertheless, entertained them handsomely, and, on the following day, consented to enter into the desired covenant. This matter was just concluded, when Isaac's men brought him word that they had reached the spring in the well which they were clearing out, on which he significantly bestowed upon it the name, the Well of the Oath [Beersheba], which his father had given it, on nearly a similar occasion, a hundred years before. Indeed, it is astonishing how similar, almost to identity, the history of Abraham's dealings with the Philistines is to the account of Isaac's intercourse with the same people.

Being now on the borders of the Hittites, into whose districts Esau's huntings often led him, Esau soon formed such connections as led to his marriage with two women of that nation, Judith and Bashemath, by name. He was then forty years of age, which, as already remarked, seems to have been the established age of manhood until the time of Moses*. This proceeding was a great grief of mind to his father and mother, who were, as usual, very anxious that their sons should strengthen the family ties, and keep the race unmixed, by marriages in their own family. Their feelings in this matter became one of the natural instrumentalities whereby God effected his purpose of keeping the chosen race apart and separate; and, doubtless, formed one of the reasons, so to speak, why a Bedouin family, in which such feelings are always strong, was in the first instance selected for this great object.

Esau, however, did not separate himself from his parents; and he still retained the chief place in the affections of his father, who continued to regard him as the heir of the promises. He was probably unacquainted with the sale of the birthright, which was a transaction too little to the credit of any of the parties concerned to make them anxious to tell him of it; or, if he did know it, he may have regarded it as a mere youthful trick—the effect of fatigue and hunger, to which no importance was to be attached. When, therefore, at the age of 137 years, Isaac's eyesight had failed, and other infirmities of age had grown upon him, he imagined that the day of his death could not be far distant, and prepared to confer upon his first-born, in a formal blessing, that full inheritance of the promises made to Abraham, which he desired him to possess, and which he unadvisedly deemed himself qualified to bestow. As this matter involves some points of difficulty, a little explanation may not be unacceptable to the reader.

As these were not days of written documents, it appears to have been the custom for fathers, when they found their last days approaching, to assemble their sons, and bless them, or, in other words, deliver an oral WILL, in which, mixed with matter of retrospect or anticipation, each was told what he was to do and to inherit. In the family of Abraham, quite a new and interesting application of this custom arose, since the heritage comprehended objects over which the father had no control, and benefits which he did not himself possess, and could not, as of himself, bequeath to others. Therefore the patriarchs could not properly, on their own authority, declare the appropriation of the blessings promised or bestowed in the covenant made with Abraham; though, if they had so chosen, they might probably, on their own responsibility, have declared whatever appropriations they deemed fitting of the actual property—the flocks

* Compare Exod. ii. 11, Acts vii. 23.

and herds, the silver and the gold—which they then possessed. For this reason—to anticipate the history a little—Jacob himself, in his old age, appears to have disposed of his actual property in the usual way; but no notice is taken of it in Scripture, which is, however, very particular to tell us how, before his death, he assembled his twelve sons to declare to them what God had shown him, respecting the distribution among them of the heritage of promise.

Now, to return, Abraham is not recorded to have performed any such act of blessing; and the reason is plain,—he provided for all his sons in his own lifetime, and had nothing further to say to them concerning the property remaining with him, and which belonged to Isaac. And then, as to the heirship of the promises, there was nothing whatever for him to declare on that point, and the divine will had repeatedly declared its appropriation to Sarah's son. But, in the present instance, the case was different. Isaac had two sons; the claim of the eldest of whom to the secular heirship was unquestionable; which of them might inherit the promises of the covenant was less certain: but, in the absence of any positive direction, Isaac might infer that in this case, and thenceforth, it was to follow the course of nature, and form a part of the brilliant heritage of the first-born. He appears to have made this inference, and to have concluded himself authorized, without any special direction from God, to deal with the whole heritage under that impression. If his partialities had led him to prefer Jacob, he would have hesitated to alter, on his own authority, what was considered the course of nature; but in regarding his favourite Esau as the heir of the covenant, there seemed no responsibility of alteration, but only the confirmation of that which nature appeared to have appointed, and which God had not seemed to him to set aside.

On whatever views Isaac proceeded, he certainly acted on his own authority when he said to Esau,—Take "thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die." This did not escape the ears of Rebekah, who, finding that her husband was at last about to bestow on Esau what she herself considered the due of Isaac, immediately, with the ready ingenuity peculiar to her sex, thought of a device whereby this plan might be frustrated, and the important blessing diverted to the son she better loved. She proposed this plan to Jacob; but even he was startled at its boldness, and urged some objections; but as these were not objections of principle, and only arose from fear of the consequences of detection, they were easily removed by his mother, who was very willing to take all the consequences on herself, and he then submitted to her direction. He went and fetched two good kids from the flocks, with which Rebekah hastened to prepare savoury meat, such as Isaac loved. She then produced a dress belonging to Esau, for Jacob to put on; and, when he was clad, fastened about his hands the skins of the goats, to imitate the hairiness of Esau; and then she gave him the savoury mess, with bread, to take to the blind old man. This was a deservedly anxious moment to both Jacob and his mother; for they had two fears—one, lest Isaac should detect the imposture, and the other, lest Esau should return before all was over. But all took effect according to their wish: for although some probable doubt about the fitness of his own course made Isaac guarded and suspicious; and although his ear, sharpened by blindness, enabled him to detect the difference of the voice, and the quickness of the assumed Esau's return excited his surprise, the feel and fresh smell of the dress which Jacob wore, and the hairiness of his hands, lulled his doubts, and he received the savoury mess which the deceiver brought, and afterwards drank the wine which he offered. Then he said, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son;" and when Jacob went near to kiss him, he said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord

over thy brethren; and *let thy mother's sons* bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be every one that blesseth thee." There can, we imagine, be no doubt that Isaac *intended* thus to convey to Esau the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham: but, from the want of precision in the terms which he employs, it may be questioned if he well understood what those blessings really were. Nor would this be much marvel; for, if the truth must be told, Isaac appears to have been rather a weak and rather an obtuse person: nor had his mind been enlarged by much intercourse with God; for Jehovah, who had appeared often to his father, and did hereafter appear many times to his own son, manifested his presence to *him* only twice. The clause, "be lord over thy brethren," may seem to indicate his knowledge of the intimation which had been made to Rebekah before the birth of her sons,—"the elder shall serve the younger." —and to be designedly in counteraction of the impression which it had made. The expression, "Let *thy mother's sons* bow down to thee," has also a very invidious look, and seems as if levelled, with no good will, at Jacob, the mother's favourite.

The design having thus succeeded, Jacob left his father; and he had scarcely departed when Esau returned from his hunting, and, with the game he had killed, prepared such savoury meat as his father loved, and bare it to him. We may imagine the consternation of Isaac when the well-known voice of his beloved son exclaimed, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." He trembled very exceedingly, and said, "Who? where is he who hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? *yea, and he shall be blessed.*" The turn in this last clause is very remarkable, and seems to intimate that the patriarch received a sudden conviction, which he had half suspected from the first, but had been unwilling to entertain, that Jacob was the heir of the promises. Whether this conviction was the result of some sudden act of mind, or that inspiration and direction from above, acting upon his mind, for which he ought, in the first instance, to have waited before he undertook to assign the heirship of the covenant, may appear doubtful to many; but the latter seems the more probable alternative, as it is manifest that presently after he spoke of what he did not *previously* know, and of what he could not possibly know but through the spirit of prophecy.

The impetuous Esau was aghast at this intimation; he cried, with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me, also, O my father!" To which Isaac could only reply by reminding him that his brother had come with subtilty, and taken the blessing intended for him. This called to Esau's mind his earlier wrong; and, adverting to the double meaning of his name*, he said, "Is not he rightly named *Jacob?* for he hath *supplanted* me these two times;" but again he returned to the single point in which his hope lay, and exclaimed, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" This must have reminded Isaac, perhaps with some compunction, that in blessing, as he is supposed, his first-born, he had not, intentionally, kept in view any blessing for his youngest son. Now, convinced of an overruling control which precluded him from recalling the blessing he had unknowingly given to Jacob, he answered, "Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" But Esau, fairly overpowered, and incapable of taking in any but one broad idea, persisted in his right to an equivalent blessing, if not exactly the one intended for him,—"Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept." The blind old man must have been deeply tried, not only in witnessing this affliction of his son, but to feel that his wishes and hopes for him had been brought to nothing. But then, or just before, he received such a clear impression or vision as to his son's future lot as enabled him to gratify his wish. "Behold, thy dwelling shall be remote from the fatness of

* *Jacob* means *a supplanter*, as well as *a heel*.

the earth, and from the dew of heaven *; by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother: but the time will come when thou shalt prevail, and shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." We shall see the fulfilment of this in due season.

All the parties were more or less to blame in this curious transaction. Isaac, for acting without due authority, and, as indicated by his conduct, with doubt that he was doing right. Even Esau cannot claim much of our sympathy in his too late clamour for a benefit which he had so childlishly and lightly bartered away; and as to Jacob and his mother, if they had supposed the blessing due to Esau, their plots to deprive him of it would have been crimes of a deep dye; but as they believed the youngest son to be by the appointment of God the heir of the promises, they had better have left Him to effect his own purposes in his own way and his own time, without seeking to promote his objects by such paltry and needless devices. Jacob's craft, his lies, and his heartless impositions will always bear a very bad look; and his conduct leaves such an impression upon our minds, that it takes a long while before we get reconciled to him; and it is not till after he has passed the river Jordan, on his return from Mesopotamia, that he obtains our respect. These *clever* operations proceeded on the principle of doing wrong to prevent wrong, or to obtain good.

Isaac was too much humbled by the consciousness of his own share in the wrong-doing, and by the certainty he now possessed that Jacob was the real heir of the blessing he had obtained, to harbour any resentment, or to make any complaints; on the contrary, while Esau was still the beloved of his heart, he began henceforth to take unusual interest about one whom he now recognised as the peculiar object of the divine favour. But as for Esau, his resentment was fierce and deep, and only to be appeased by blood. He knew that all the blessings promised to Abraham must descend in the line of Isaac, who had no sons but himself and Jacob; and, therefore, while in slaying his crafty brother he would gratify the hatred he now felt towards him, he inferred that he should by the same act become the heir of all. Him, therefore, he determined to destroy; but out of regard to his father, whom he sincerely loved, he determined not to execute his purpose while he lived—the rather that his end seemed then, to himself and others, to be at no great distance—though he actually lived above forty years after these trying events.

The blunt and open character of Esau disqualified him from keeping his own secret. His intention transpired, and was reported to Rebekah; who was seriously alarmed, and proposed to Jacob that he should proceed, secretly, to her brother Laban, in Mesopotamia, and remain with him a little while till Esau's resentment should subside. On this the safety, not of one only, but both her sons, seemed to her to depend. For although we do not learn of any judicial tribunals which could have undertaken to punish Esau for the act of murder he contemplated, there is no doubt that he would have been amenable to the fatal and resistless operation of the law of *Thâr*, or blood-avenging, which existed from the most early ages, and which still, by its action upon the fears of the wild tribes of the desert, and indeed of all the less civilised tribes of western Asia, from the shores of the Red Sea to the Caucasian mountains, keeps in check their fiercer passions, and makes them backward to shed blood. By this law the nearest relative of the slain party is bound to pursue the slayer, and to rest not—never to let his purpose sleep—till he has exacted life for life and blood for blood. In the present case, if Esau had effected his intention, after the death of his father, the duty of the goël, or blood-avenger, Jacob having no children of his own, would have devolved upon the eldest son of Ishmael—that brother of Isaac having, at this time, himself been dead several years; and that this duty would be inexorably executed, the purely Bedouin

* This is the reverse of our current version; and while the text allows this interpretation, it is best to adopt it, as otherwise the same blessing is thus far given to Esau as to Jacob, while, in fact, it was not true that the posterity of Edom possessed a territory that can well be considered fertile. This is the interpretation of Houbigant, Le Clerc, Castilio, De Vence, Purver, Boothroyd, and others.

habits of the Ishmaelite race must have rendered unquestionable. Hence the anxiety of Rebekah lest she should lose both her sons in one day, for, at the least, Esau must have taken to flight—must have become a fugitive and a vagabond, like Cain, the instant he slew his brother.

In proposing the plan of Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia to Isaac, his wife thought it right to spare him this new trouble; and therefore she merely stated what was doubtless one of the reasons which made the journey the more desirable in her eyes, though it was not the only one or the principal. She reminded him of the marriage of Esau to the daughters of Canaanites, and what a serious calamity it would be if Jacob, now the recognised heir of the promises, should be led to follow his brother's example. As his shrewd wife suspected, Isaac caught at this, and himself proposed the very plan she had herself arranged. He sent for Jacob, and charged him not to take a wife from among the Canaanites, but to proceed to Padan-Aram [Mesopotamia], and there seek a wife among his cousins, the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. He ended with the broad and cheerful recognition of Jacob as the heir of the promises, and blessing him as such.

When Abraham sent his servant the same journey to get a wife for his son Isaac, there were ten camels, and servants, and precious things; but now the son himself sets forth, alone and on foot, with no other equipment than the staff which he carried in his hand. The secrecy which the resentment of Esau rendered necessary accounts sufficiently for the difference.

Esau, who was probably absent on one of his huntings when Jacob departed, learnt in due time, probably from his father, where and on what errand his brother was gone; and seeing from this how distasteful his own marriages had been to Isaac, he, thinking to mend the matter, and, to ingratiate himself with his father, went and married one of the daughters of Ishmael. This is usually described as one of the hasty blunders of Esau: but we do not see that it was. According to Bedouin usages, this was the most proper marriage he could form, and, in fact, the hand of Ishmael's eldest daughter was due to the eldest son of Isaac as a matter of right, and, as to religious belief and practice, the house of Ishmael was probably at this time as pure, and probably more so than that of Laban. The *necessity* for sending to Mesopotamia for a wife only existed in the case of Isaac, who otherwise

[Oriental Shepherds.]

must have married a woman of alien race. But now there were grand-daughters of Abraham, through Hagar and Keturah—nearer in blood and, at least, as suitable for wives to the sons of Isaac as were the daughters of Laban, the resort to whom now by Jacob does not prove that no other resort was lawful, but was the result of circumstances, among which may be reckoned the fact that Isaac himself had been supplied thence, together with the natural partialities of Rebekah for her own family in Padan-Aram. If no other course were proper in this generation, neither would any other have been so in the next; and yet not one of Jacob's twelve sons took a wife from the house of Laban. After that, the question became simplified; for the sons and daughters of these twelve sons could and did intermarry. But notwithstanding this view of the matter, exonerative of Esau, it was doubtless for wise purposes that, while the heirship of the promises was still vested in a single person, that person should be compelled by circumstances so to marry as to obviate all danger of that intermixture of the chosen line with even proximate tribes, which it was a part of the divine plan to prevent.

DATES.—We are now arrived at the year of the world 3495, the year before Christ 1916; the year of Isaac 137, the year of Esau and Jacob 77.

CHAPTER IV.

JACOB.

JACOB proceeded on his long journey to Mesopotamia, making, in the first place, for the fords of the Jordan, which river his course obliged him to cross. On the second or third evening he arrived in the neighbourhood of a town which bore the name of Luz, on account of the numerous almond-trees which grew there; and here he determined to spend the night.

Having procured from the neighbouring town such refreshments (including oil) as he needed for his present relief and for his use in the morning, he lay down to rest, placing a stone under his head for a pillow. He appears to have been in a dejected state of mind, occasioned by the recent separation from his mother and father, the prospect of the toilsome journey before him, and the uncertainties of his future lot. But now he was cheered by a dream which conveyed to him a lively notion of the watchful providence of God, and assured him of the Divine protection. He beheld the similitude of a ladder, which seemed to connect earth with heaven; and on this ladder he saw the angels of God descending and ascending, proceeding on and returning from the missions entrusted to them by ONE who appeared above, and who, at last, spoke to Jacob himself, and, after announcing himself as the JEHOVAH of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, proceeded to recognise him as the heir of the promises, and to renew to him, in express terms, the covenant made with Abraham; and then, mercifully compassionating his depressed state and forlorn condition, the Divine vision added,—"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob, who had not before been favoured with any manifestations of that JEHOVAH of whose greatness and goodness, and of whose especial regard for their race, he had often heard Abraham and Isaac speak, awoke with deep awe, and exclaimed, "Surely JEHOVAH is in this place, and I knew it not." And then he added, with some terror, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." In

allusion to what he said on this occasion, the place was thenceforward called Bethel [*the house of God*] by himself and his descendants, in which name the more ancient one of Luz was soon lost.

Jacob arose early in the morning, and his first act was to set up, or plant on one of its ends, the stone which had served him for a bolster. Upon the top of this he poured some of his oil, and in doing so, vowed a remarkable and characteristic vow which cannot be adequately represented but in its own language:—"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall Jehovah be my God; and *this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house:* and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." The allusion to the meaning with which the stone was set up is very interesting, as it offers the first historical trace of a custom of placing erect stones as memorials and evidences of different events and actions—of victories, providences, vows, contracts, boundaries, and sepulchres. In some of these meanings—and more especially as votive and sepulchral memorials—this old patriarchal custom exists everywhere to this day, either in actual usage or in traces of one extinct; and hence, although the Druids preserved this custom also, it cannot be called druidical*, distinctively, like some other of the old Hebrew usages concerning stones, which we find at a later day almost confined to the Druids.

Jacob's declared intention of devoting to God a tenth of the substance which might be given to him, probably means that he would expend that proportion in the building of altars, in offering sacrifices, and in the performance of such other acts, if any, in which the patriarchal religion allowed men to consider that they rendered God service.

Jacob proceeded on his journey, and in due time arrived at the famous old well of Charran, where Eliezer had first seen Rebekah. Here he found some shepherds of that place waiting with their flocks. Being himself well versed in all the usages of pastoral life, he was struck that they did not at once water their flocks; but, on inquiring the reason, was told that different flocks were entitled to water from that well, and that the well could not be opened till they were all on the ground, or rather, till all the shepherds of those flocks were present. Continuing to talk with them, he learned that they knew Laban, that he was well, and that his home flock was kept by his daughter Rachel, for whose presence they were then actually waiting before they opened the well. While they were thus in talk, Rachel came with her sheep, and the kind stranger—the forlorn son of a wealthy house—hastened to render a mark of civility and attention which was probably not less acceptable to her than were the ornaments of gold which her aunt had received from his father's servant at that place; with the ease of an accomplished shepherd, he removed the stone from the mouth of the well and watered her flock for her; and when he had done this, he drew near to her and kissed her, and told her, with many tears, that he was her own cousin, the son of Rebekah, her aunt. Rachel ran to bear these tidings to her father, who instantly hastened to meet his sister's son, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him into the house. The reception which Laban gave to one who came in so humble a guise, raises the generally unamiable and self-seeking character of Rebekah's brother considerably in our esteem, and satisfies us that, within certain limits—which soon enough appear,—he wished to show all possible kindness and just treatment to Jacob. His tone did not alter when he understood how matters really stood with Rebekah's son: "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh," was his emphatic answer to his nephew's statement, which probably concluded with an intimation that Isaac did not know there was any other object in Jacob's journey than to obtain a wife from the house of Nahor.

* As we shall have occasion to use this word, to avoid the necessity of circumlocution, we may as well intimate at once that, although in strict propriety it could not be so used, we shall employ it to express those customs of the old Hebrews which the druidical religion preserved in a long subsequent age.

Among people of such habits of life as we are now describing, it would be a reproach to any man, when on a visit, not to take his full share in the occupations and pursuits of the family; and the estimation in which he is held will be proportioned to the disposition and power which he manifests of making himself useful to his friends. Jacob accordingly exerted himself, during the first month of his stay, with such good effect as made a strong impression upon his uncle, who was too shrewd a man not to perceive that, probably from his having spent all his life in tents, and latterly in active superintendence of his father's flocks, Jacob had such a very superior knowledge of pastoral affairs as would render his services of much value. Therefore, at the end of the month, he spoke to him, observing that since he seemed likely to make some stay, he was unwilling to take advantage of their relationship to receive the benefit of his assistance without price; but was anxious to make him whatever recompense he desired. Now Jacob during his stay had not been unobservant of Laban's two daughters. The eldest of them, Leah, was afflicted with a disorder in her eyes, but seems in other respects to have been an agreeable and sensible woman. The other, Rachel, whom he had first seen at the well, was very beautiful, and as she participated in the care of the flock, there were more points of sympathy between her and Jacob, and he saw more of her than of Leah, who, as the eldest daughter, was much engaged in the household affairs. On all these grounds it was natural that the heart of Jacob preferred Rachel; indeed, he loved her deeply.

To the fair and even liberal proposal of Laban, his nephew therefore made answer, that he only desired that Rachel might be given to him for wife; and that, seeing he had not wherewith to pay for her the price* which custom required, he was willing to give his services for seven years, as an equivalent. Laban readily closed with this proposal; and the arrangement thus made, is, to this day, not unusual in Syria with young men who have nothing but their services to offer the family from which they desire a wife.

Usage required that a month should pass between the formation and completion of such an agreement; and when the month was expired, Jacob demanded his wife. On this, Laban assembled a large party of his friends, to keep the wedding-feast, which, it seems, even at this early date, lasted during a week. On the first evening, Laban led his veiled daughter to the chamber of her husband, which was left in darkness: thus it was not until the morning that Jacob discovered that the wily Laban, instead of giving him his beloved Rachel, had brought him his less favoured daughter, Leah. This was enough to throw a meeker man than Jacob into a passion; but, on being reproached with his conduct, Laban coolly answered, that it was not the custom of the country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder. This is so conformable to oriental ideas, that it is very likely to have been true; but it was his duty to have told this to his nephew when the agreement was made, instead of forcing upon him, for a wife, a woman he did not wish to marry, in the place of one whom he truly loved. But his real object was to get rid first of his least attractive daughter, as well as to secure a longer claim upon the valued services of his sister's son. Accordingly he added, that, when he had completed the matrimonial week due to Leah, there would be no objection to his taking Rachel also, provided he would undertake to serve another seven years for her sake. Circumstanced as he was by the guile of Laban, Jacob was compelled to agree to this; and we are touchingly told that the further seven years which he served for Rachel, "seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

To Jacob's former indifference towards Leah, was now added the disgust which her evident participation in the fraud practised upon him was calculated to inspire. But it turned out that Leah had a ground of exultation over her favoured rival, in the fact

* Lest any reader should be offended at the use of this word, we may mention that *this* is the correct and formal term for the consideration which the bridegroom is obliged to make to the family from which he takes a daughter or sister.

that she bore four sons to her husband, while her sister was barren. Finding this to be the case, Rachel bethought herself of giving to Jacob her handmaid, named Bilhah, whom she had received from her father on her marriage, under the notion that the children which this woman might bear would be counted as hers. It will be remembered that Sarah had given her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham, under a similar idea. The plan so far succeeded, that Bilhah became the mother of two sons, both of whom received from Rachel names expressive of her exultation. Leah, finding how her sister's plan answered, and that she had herself ceased to bear children, persuaded Jacob to take also *her* handmaid, Zilpah, and by her he had two sons; then Leah herself recommenced bearing, and had two sons and a daughter. At last the cries of Rachel herself were heard in heaven; her womb was opened, and she conceived, and bare a son — Joseph, the favoured and beautiful, who fills so large a place in the history of the patriarchs. Thus the fourteen years passed away, during which Jacob must have been much disturbed by the bickerings and heart-burnings of his wives; and at the end of which he found himself the father of eleven sons and a daughter*.

Jacob's full term of service being now expired, he applied to Laban for leave to return to the land of Canaan with his wives and children. But Laban begged him to prolong his stay, "for I have learned by experience," said he, "that Jehovah hath blessed me for thy sake." This gave Jacob the opportunity of hinting that he fully knew the value of his own services to his uncle, whom he reminded of the comparatively small extent of his pastoral property on his own arrival, and how amazingly it had since been increased — not, indeed, through his exertions, though nothing had been wanting on his part,—but through the Lord's blessing on his account. He added that it was now become his duty to provide for his own house also. In answer to this, Laban intimated his willingness to grant him whatever remuneration for his future services he might himself require. Jacob then made the extraordinary proposal that, seeing shepherds were usually paid for their services from the produce of the flock, his payment should consist of all the dark sheep and all the party-coloured goats which might hereafter be born in the flocks under his care, after all the animals so coloured in the existing flock were separated and committed to other hands. As the proportion of animals of such colours is in all cases small in a flock of Western Asia, and as the ordinary physical chances for the propagation of those colours seemed to be diminished by the proposed separation, Laban readily agreed to a plan which seemed so advantageous to himself. He made the stipulated separation, and gave the separated flock to the charge of his sons, directing them to keep at three days' distance from the pastures which Jacob frequented.

But Laban had soon occasion to find, if he had not found it before, that his nephew was fully a match for himself in craft. The terms of the agreement, as Laban understood them, must have been, that hazard, operating with certain drawbacks, would adequately remunerate Jacob for his care of the flock of which his uncle was the proprietor. The intention, therefore, with which Rebekah's son made his proposal, as indicated by its subsequent execution, speaks far more in behalf of his superior knowledge of the shepherd's art, and is much more in unison with his early operations upon Esau and upon his own father, than it is moral, or, in any sense, honest. His profound knowledge of the habits of the animals which form the pastor's wealth, put him in possession of the fact, that the powerful thirst which, in those warm climates, the animals necessarily feel by the time they are brought to the wells for water, makes the time of drinking one of

* It may be useful to add here their names, with the years of their birth (stated with reference to the age of their father) annexed, as settled by Dr. Hales, that the reader may be clearly aware of their relative ages. By Leah—Reuben, 78, Simeon, 80, Levi, 82, Judah, 83; by Bilhah—Dan, 84, Naphtali, 85; by Zilpah—Gad, 86, Asher, 87; by Leah again—Issachar, 88, Zebulon, 89, Dinah, 90; by Rachel—Joseph, 91, Benjamin, 104. We add the name of Benjamin to complete the list, though he was not born till some years after the date at which we are now arrived.

the highest excitement to them, as manifested by the disposition which, in the proper season, they then show to the act of propagating their kind. This state of excitement lays their imaginations open—so to speak — to receive impressions from the slightest and apparently the most inadequate causes; and that, when the impression has been received, it may operate upon the colour of the issue of those animals in which colour varies, few physiologists will question. To avail himself of his knowledge of these facts, Jacob took rods of the poplar, hazel, and plane, and peeled white streaks in them by laying bare the whiteness of the rods. Thus prepared, he set them in the troughs from which the flocks were watered; and the unusual appearance at that well-known and favourite place could not fail to draw their attention strongly at that most exciting time —when they drank and also coupled—which we have indicated. The result was, that the young which were conceived under such circumstances were of the colours which Jacob required, and which he was entitled to set apart as his own property; and as he only tried this operation upon the stronger animals of the flock, leaving the weak ones to the course of nature, it happened that not only did his share become very large, but the stronger animals of the flock were his, and the weaker Laban's.

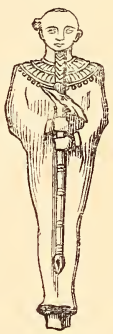
This transaction has been a subject of various and warm discussion. The natural adequacy of the cause to produce the assigned effect has been denied by parties entirely opposed to each other,—by sceptics, who endeavour to throw doubt on the truth of the scriptural narrative, and by truly pious persons, who believe that the result proceeded from a miraculous interposition of Divine power, and that the operations were in themselves nothing but as sanctified and *directed* by God. To both parties we would say, that we much doubt whether they and the authorities on which they depend knew so much of the nature of sheep and goats as did Jacob, who for nearly a century had lived constantly among the flocks; and that a denial ought to be made with diffidence which is founded on observations made in European countries, where, for the most part, the animals themselves are so differently circumstanced, and their natural characteristics less actively developed than under the skies of Syria and Mesopotamia, and in the broad and warm plains in which they feed, and under the modes of treatment to which they are subject there. And to the latter we would beg to remark, that we are not told that God did direct Jacob to take this course; and the deep reverence with which we regard that great and holy name makes us shrink with intense repugnance from such attempts to exonerate Jacob at the expense of making Him a party in this most fraudulent proceeding. It is by such proceedings as this—by attempts to clear the characters of the eminent persons of Biblical history from all stain, by connecting the Divine sanction with their most weak or culpable actions—that more real and vital injury has been done to the cause of truth than by all the sneers and insinuations which avowed scorners of revelation ever uttered. For ourselves, this proceeding seems to bear, from beginning to end, the aspect of a complicated and well-planned piece of dishonesty. The proposal was Jacob's own, when Laban left him the choice of his own terms; and the very singularity of it suggests that he was well aware that he possessed the means of obtaining a far greater benefit from it than any one else could have supposed likely, or than would have been possible under the operation of ordinary circumstances; and the real dishonesty of employing artificial means for his purpose, is greatly enhanced by his measure for securing all the stronger animals for himself, and leaving the weak to the original owner of the flock. The real excuse for Jacob, and for many of the unseemly actions into which some most venerable persons in the Hebrew history did at times fall, lies in this—first, that those eminent persons whom we fondly picture to ourselves as somewhat more than men, were men only, and often, as in themselves, very weak men; and, secondly, that they were Orientals;—for it must not be concealed, that in the east, however pure may be the religious

principle, and lofty the religious feeling, and however strong the pride of honour, there is now, and ever has been, such a weakness of the moral sense as is not without much pain and difficulty comprehended by those who have from infancy breathed in a moral atmosphere which Christianity has purified, and which, by its insensible influences, keeps in a state of moral healthiness even those who have not found therein the breath of life.

We are thoroughly convinced that, at the present day, there are, in Western Asia, and, least of all among the Bedouins, very few men, even among persons of character and station, who would not to the end of their lives make their boast of such splendid exploits in overreaching as those which passed between Laban and Jacob. They would be incapable of seeing anything more in them than evidences of their own ability and cleverness; and their auditors, labouring under the same incapacity, would, to a man, listen with deep interest and admiration.

The story of Laban's cheating Jacob into taking the wrong wife would be received with rapture; and Jacob himself would be regarded rather with contempt than pity, until the story of his dealings with the sheep and goats intrusted to his care, which would not fail to be heard with shouts of delight, should turn the scale of admiration in his favour.

Now, from this time forward, Jacob "increased exceedingly," and in the course of about six years, he "had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses." This prosperity excited the envy of Laban's family, and his sons were heard to say, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory." Laban, also, as might be expected, looked much less pleasant than in former times. Jacob, therefore, began to think it high time for him to return to the land of Canaan; and any doubts on the subject were removed by a Divine command to that effect. As he suspected that Laban would not let him withdraw unmolested with all the substance he had acquired, he resolved to go away without notice; and as his uncle was absent at a sheep-shearing, the opportunity was too favourable to be neglected. But first he consulted his wives, calling them forth into the fields, that they might not be overheard. He stated the matter fully to them, and had the satisfaction of finding that they entered entirely into his views. He therefore hastened his preparations for departure, in the course of which Rachel managed to secrete the small superstitious images, called Teraphim, which belonged to



[Teraphim?]

her father. This she did, most probably, for the purpose of continuing, in the strange land to which she was going, that superstitious use of them, or reference to them, in which she had been brought up.

All being ready, Jacob mounted his wives and children upon camels, and sped away toward the Euphrates with his flocks and herds, and all his substance. Having crossed the great river, he pursued his way for several days, until he arrived at the mountains of Gilead, where he pitched his tent, and resolved to spend the time usually allotted to rest.

Laban did not hear of Jacob's flight until the third day after he started; but no sooner did he learn it, than he called together the men of his family and household, and commenced a rapid pursuit. That he persisted in this pursuit for seven days, during which he traversed all the distance from Chairan to the mountains of Gilead, shows the inveteracy of his purpose, which, it seems, was to take from Jacob all the

property with which he had departed. But the night before he overtook the fugitive in Gilead, God appeared to him in a dream, and warned him, saying, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." This changed his purpose entirely; for such an injunction as this, even Laban dared not disobey; but being now, as he knew, so near to his fugitive son-in-law and daughters, he determined still to follow and seek an interview with them.

When they met, some strong recrimination passed between Laban and Jacob. The former professed especial indignation that his daughters had been hurried away, like "captives taken with the sword," and that no opportunity had been allowed him of giving one farewell kiss to them and their children, and of sending them away with music and with songs. And after declaring that only the vision of the past night prevented him from making use of the power he possessed, he added, with some heat, "And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" Jacob, who was really ignorant of Rachel's theft, disavowed all knowledge of his teraphim, and declared that any one in whose possession they were found should be put to death. He also told Laban to go with his friends and make a strict search everywhere, to convince himself that there was nothing in the camp which he could justly claim for his own. His uncle took him at his word, and proceeded to make a very strict search. It seems that tents had only been pitched for the accommodation of the women and children, and that each of Jacob's wives had her separate tent. Laban went into each of them; but as he entered that of Rachel the last, she had an opportunity of hiding the teraphim under the pack of her camel, and seated herself upon it, as Bedouin women often do when enjoying rest on a journey: and when her father entered, she, with much more art than decorum, accounted for not rising to receive him, by such a statement as to her condition, as she knew would not only excuse her in that, but would induce him speedily to leave her tent. The plan answered: and Laban returned with a confession that he was unable to find that for which he sought. On this, Jacob, who before had been more disposed to excuse than vindicate his retreat, took a high tone in his turn. He stated how long and faithfully he had served Laban—fourteen years for his two daughters, and six years for his cattle, and alleged that his wages had several times been altered, when it was found that the agreed mode of payment proved more productive than had been foreseen. There are many traits in the preceding statement illustrative of the manners of that age and state of life; and one further passage is too descriptive of the condition and duties of an eastern shepherd to be other than literally given:—"That which was torn of beasts," Jacob said, "I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether it was stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." Laban did not attempt to answer; but gave a change to the subject by saying, that although he considered all he saw to be his, yet, as a father, he had no desire to interfere with the prosperity of his daughters and their children. He then proposed that they should enter into a covenant of future peace; and the mode in which it was formed and established will seem singularly interesting to those who inquire into old usages and the ideas connected with them—particularly those to which the name of Druidical has been assigned. Jacob, as he had done at Bethel, set up a tall stone on its end; and he also directed his people to collect large stones to form a heap. They all sat down then, and ate beside or upon this heap: it being a very early and still subsisting custom for those who entered into a friendly covenant to eat and drink together. And as it was also customary to impose significant and commemorative names upon the stony memorials which were erected on such occasions, Laban, in his Syriac dialect, imposed the name of Jegar-sahadutha upon the heap; and Jacob called it Galeed, both of which names have the same meaning of, THE WIT-

NESS HEAP; but to the erect stone, the name of Mizpeh, THE WATCH, or WATCH-TOWER was given. The significant application of these terms is derived from the manner in which they were employed by Laban. "This heap is a WITNESS," he said to Jacob, "between me and thee this day," and, with reference to the erected stone, "Jehovah WATCH between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." After thus establishing these stony evidences, Laban, as the elder and superior party, continued to state the terms of the covenant; which were,—that Jacob should treat his daughters kindly, *and not take any other wives besides them*, which last is a remarkable and significant stipulation which will not escape the reader's special notice. "Behold this heap," continued Laban, "and behold this pillar, which I have cast between me and thee; let this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, *for harm*." Laban then invoked the God of Abraham, and of Nahor, to judge between them; and Jacob called upon the REVERED ONE of his father Isaac.

In the account of this transaction the idea of the erected stone and the heap being *witnesses* is so repeatedly produced, as clearly to evince their intention. These memorials belong to an age in which written bonds and contracts were unthought of, or, at least, were not in use among the people with whom the early Scriptural history makes us acquainted. If one in those days saw a stone or a number of stones arranged in such a manner as to suggest that they could not have been so placed by accident, he, knowing the custom of his own time and country, would be aware that the erection was intended as the monument of some covenant or vow, and he would respect it as a sacred thing, not to be disturbed or injured by him. The name which it bore would suggest the object of the erection, and if he desired further information, he would seldom fail to learn, from the people near the place or in the district, the traditionary account of the occasion on which the name had been imposed, and, consequently, the particulars of the transaction which the name and the erection were designed to commemorate. Thus these stones were more effective WITNESSES or memorials than the inhabitants of a highly civilized and densely peopled country would, at the first view, be inclined to suppose.

Jacob slaughtered some sheep in the evening, and made a feast for Laban's party and his own. They spent the night together among these mountains, which thenceforward took the name of Gilead; and Laban set out in the morning on his return to Padan-Aram.

No sooner was Jacob relieved from the anxiety which the apprehended pursuit and actual appearance of Laban had occasioned, than his mind was much pressed by the recollection of the danger that might still be apprehended from the old resentments of his brother Esau, who, as he knew, had already established himself in the land of Seir, where he had become the chief of a powerful clan. But when he next formed his camp, after journeying among the mountains of Gilead, he received much encouragement from the vision of another great camp near his own, from which the angels of God approached towards him *. This he rightly interpreted as an assurance of the Divine protection, and memorialized the event by calling the place Mahanaim †. He then, with reassured heart, proceeded to take such measures as the occasion seemed to require; and in all these his profound knowledge of character, and his consummate tact in acting upon it, are manifested with singular force. He determined to send messengers to announce his arrival. The distance, which could not well be *less* than a hundred miles, would alone be a strong indication of his respect for, and his wish to stand well with, his brother; and he took great care that his messengers should not injure the effect of this measure by their mode of stating their errand, but instructed them in the form of words which they were to employ, every

* To this the Psalmist appears to allude:—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." Psa. xxxiv. 7.

† The [two] camps.

syllable of which was admirably calculated to assure Esau that he was very far from pretending to any personal superiority in virtue of his purchased birthright, but, on the contrary, looked up to his elder brother with great respect: and lest he should imagine that he was returning as a needy adventurer to claim a temporal inheritance, and to devour the substance of their common father, the men were particularly charged to expatiate on the wealth which he had acquired in Padan-Aram *.

The messengers returned in due time without any verbal answer from Esau, but with the alarming announcement, "We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him."

Apprehending that Esau could not be coming with so formidable a force without the most hostile intentions, Jacob was much distressed at this intelligence. He cried to God for protection, in a most feeling and even pathetic address: and then, with his usual prudence and decision, proceeded to take such measures as the emergency seemed to require. In the first place he divided his company and possessions into two bands, between which he purposed to place a wide marching interval, that if any purposes of injury or vengeance should be manifested by Esau on meeting the foremost division, the chance of escape might be left open to that which remained behind, and which contained all that he held dearest and most valuable. Nor was he insensible of the effect which a preceding exhibition of presents might have in mollifying the heart of Esau, and in preparing him to receive his brother favourably. He therefore set apart a most noble present of 200 she-goats and 20 he-goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milch camels with their colts, 40 heifers and 10 steers, 20 she-asses and 10 foals,—which list, while it suggests some idea of the large pastoral wealth which Jacob had acquired in Padan-Aram, is particularly valuable from the indication which it offers of the numerical proportions of the animals by which that wealth was composed. The milch camels and their colts were especially valuable. The animals thus selected —which, we may be sure, were the best and finest of Jacob's flocks and herds—were to go first of all, and were divided into droves with intervals between them, not only to make the more imposing display, but to afford opportunity for a succession of pacifying operations upon the temper of Esau. For the chief attendant with the first drove was carefully taught by Jacob how to deport himself and what to say, thus:—"When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, 'Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?' Then thou shalt say, 'They be thy servant Jacob's: it is a present unto my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is behind us.'" The leaders of the second and following droves were instructed to give exactly the same answers. This being arranged, they were ordered in the evening to cross the river Jabbok and proceed on their way. But Jacob himself remained still on the other side the river, with the reserved division, till some hours after, when, while it was still night, he arose, and passed all the party over that stream. When he was left alone on the other side, there came to him, in the form of a man, an angel, or rather, as Hosea (xii. 21) tells us, the same Divine person who had appeared to him at Bethel, and engaged for some time in a personal struggle with him. The stranger withheld himself from overcoming, or, indeed, allowed himself to seem the weaker party; but at last he stretched forth his hand and struck the hollow of Jacob's thigh, when the sinew instantly shrank; and thus he made his superhuman power known to the mortal with whom he strove. He then said, "Let me go; for the day breaketh:" but Jacob, who at this critical moment of his life felt the need of

* Jacob thus charged his messengers:—"Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; '*Thy servant* Jacob saith thus: I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell *my lord*, that I may find grace in thy sight.'" We are persuaded that the carefully guarded terms of respect, "thy servant," "my lord," were purposely intended to assuage the bitter feelings which seem to have been created in the mind of Esau by the knowledge that Isaac in the blessing intended for him, but which his brother had received, had made Jacob "lord over his brethren;" Isaac himself had told Esau that, in saying, "Behold, I have made him [Jacob] thy lord."

strengthening and relief, answered, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." On this the stranger told him that his name should be not only Jacob but ISRAEL *, because as a prince he had power with God, and with men also should prevail. He also blessed him, after refusing to acquaint him with his name. Thus Jacob was taught that as he had not been conquered in this contest, so neither should he be overcome by the difficulties with which he was then threatened.

Jacob departed from that place as the sun rose, and found that he halted on his thigh which had been smitten; and in memory of this, even to our own day, his descendants have abstained from eating the part which contains that sinew which, under the angel's hand, shrunk in the thigh of their forefather. How long his lameness lasted we are not told; but it seems more probable that it soon passed away, than that it continued to the end of his life, as some suppose.

Jacob had not proceeded far on his way, when he saw his brother approaching in the distance with his four hundred men. He then hastened to separate his several wives and their children in such a manner as might most contribute to the safety of those who were dearest of all to him. The two handmaids and their children went on first, then, at some distance, Leah and her children, and, last of all, Rachel and Joseph. Jacob himself then went on before them all, and, as he came near enough, he walked forward and bowed himself very low, and then went on and bowed again, and this repeatedly—after the fashion in which Orientals still approach a superior—until they met. With what purposes Esau set out to meet Jacob no one can know. They may have been stern. But he had already passed the reverent harbingers of Jacob with their presents; and, now that his long absent brother approached thus humbly towards him, the heart of the sturdy hunter melted within him, all old resentments passed away, and, obeying the kindly impulses of his own generous nature, he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.

* One who has power with God.

Afterwards, in answer to Esau's inquiries about the droves which he had met, Jacob very anxiously, and in all sincerity, pressed them upon his acceptance: for he seems not to have been yet relieved from his apprehensions; and he was well aware that for a superior to receive a present from an inferior, was a well-understood pledge of friendship, whereas to decline such an offering, or to return it after it had been received, was a common mark of dissatisfaction. Esau at first refused this costly gift, alleging that he already had enough; but, being much urged by Jacob, whose real feeling he probably penetrated and wished to relieve, he consented to take it.

Esau, taking it for granted that they were to go to Mount Seir, proposed to proceed on the journey. But this was no part of Jacob's plan, whose destination was the land of Canaan. He, therefore, without saying this, evaded compliance with his brother's proposal, by alleging the necessity which the presence of young children, and of the flocks and herds with young, imposed upon him of proceeding very slowly; for "if men should over drive them one day, all the flock will die." He, therefore, begged Esau to go on before, at his own speed, and promised to follow gently after. His brother yielded to the force of these reasons; but he still proposed to leave some of his men with him, to guide and protect him on the way. But Jacob, who dreaded such turbulent protectors, whose presence would also interfere with the execution of his plan, and who only wished himself fairly rid of the whole party, excused himself from this also, and at last Esau departed with all his people, fully expecting that Jacob would soon rejoin him in the land of Seir. But he was no sooner out of sight, than Jacob turned his course westward towards the Jordan. Why he did not cross that river and enter the land of Canaan, and why he allowed several years to pass before he went to his father, we have no means of knowing. But when he arrived at a favourable situation, about five miles from the eastern bank of the Jordan, he made preparations for some stay there, by building for his own household one of the easily con-

structed houses of that time, with numerous sheds or booths for his people and cattle. From this circumstance the site took the name of Succoth, or *booths*, which was continued to a town built in a later day on that spot.

It is thought that Jacob did not remain at Succoth more than six months before he crossed the Jordan and entered the land of his future heritage. He arrived safely in the neighbourhood of Shechem, where he made his first stay in that land. As all the land about that city was by this time appropriated, and had become of some value to the inhabitants, he was obliged to *purchase* the ground on which his camp was formed for the value of 100 lambs. Here he built an altar, and called it the altar of Elelohe Israel *: and here, in long after ages †, was shown, and still is, a well which was dug by him and bore his name.

Here Jacob spent eight years in much prosperity, and greatly respected by the people of the land. By that time his only daughter Dinah was about fifteen years of age, when, in an evil hour, she went into the town, to see the finery of the women, during some festival which the Shechemites celebrated. On this occasion she was seen by Shechem, the son of Hamor, the prince of the place; and he, being much struck by her great beauty, took her to his house, and defiled her by force. Yet after this his soul still cleaved to her, and he loved her, and spoke kindly to her; and, anxious to secure this treasure to himself, as well as to appease the resentment which the damsel's family would be sure to entertain, he begged his father to go and intercede with hers, that Dinah might become his wife.

Jacob was greatly distressed when he heard what had befallen his daughter, who still remained in Shechem's house. But his sons were then out with the cattle; and as, among the Bedouin races, when a father has children by different wives, the full brothers of a woman are, more than her father, the especial guardians of her welfare, her avengers if she is wronged, and her punishers if she errs, he made no answer to Hamor's proposals till his sons came home. They were greatly enraged when they heard of what had happened to their sister. But Hamor proceeded, with considerable address, to place his overtures in an advantageous light. He dwelt on the deep affection with which his son regarded Dinah, and did not forget to expatiate on the advantages which would result to them from so close an alliance with the Shechemites. They could intermarry, he said; and, while they might enrich themselves by establishing a free traffic in their pastoral produce with his people, they would be at perfect liberty to acquire whatever possessions in that town and district they desired. Shechem, who was himself present, was careful to add, that he would readily pay for the damsel whatever dowry or gift they might name, and this was, according to Bedouin habits, an exceedingly liberal proposal, and more likely to be satisfactory than all the rest put together. The brothers of Dinah affected to be appeased by these liberal offers: but in reality they nourished in their heart purposes of large and terrible revenge; and the readiness with which they conceived on the instant a deep-laid plot for effecting their purpose will seem most surprising to those who do not reflect how much the inventive faculties are sharpened by the necessity for prompt decision, combined with a thirst for blood. They answered, that they could not give their sister to an uncircumcised man; neither was it possible for them to form such marriages with the Shechemites as Hamor proposed, unless every man among them were circumcised. With this answer Hamor and his son returned to their town, and proceeded to the gate—the place of concourse—where they proposed a general circumcision as the only means of securing the advantages which might be obtained by forming a close connection with Jacob's wealthy tribe. These advantages were stated so strongly, that the people gave their full assent to the proposal, and were accordingly circumcised. Now the third day after the operation is that in which those who have been circumcised are the most distressed by their wound. This fact was well known to Jacob's sons; and, there-

* The mighty God of Israel. † John iv. 5.

fore, on the third day, when the Shechemites were all in pain and quite unapprehensive of danger, Simeon and Levi, the full brothers of Dinah, collected such of Jacob's people as they could persuade to join them, and entered the city, where they put Hamor and Shechem and every male to the sword; after which they went and took their sister from Shechem's house, and returned with her to the camp. Their terrible object was accomplished. But then the other sons of Jacob entered the city to plunder all its wealth. They stripped the slain of their vestures; they made plunder of everything they could find in the houses; they made the women and small children captives; and they drove off all the cattle belonging to the Shechemites which they could find in the town and its surrounding fields.

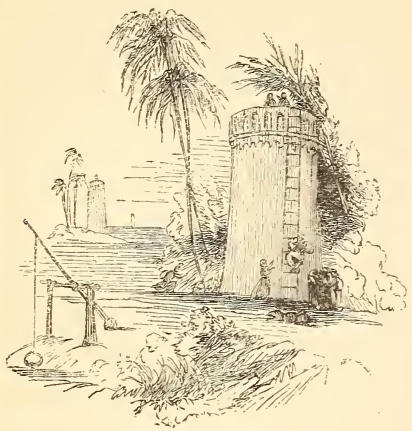
Jacob expressed his just abhorrence of this most unprincipled and barbarous deed; and he continued to retain a deep sense of it, long after all apprehension of the consequences which might be expected to result from it had passed away. Even on his death-bed he spoke of it with indignation and regret.

In the first instance Jacob saw great cause to fear that the inhabitants of the surrounding districts would unite and fall upon him, to avenge this horrid massacre. But his doubts respecting the course it might be best to take were relieved by a Divine command to proceed to Bethel, and dwell there, and erect an altar in that place to God, who had there appeared to him when he was on his road to Padan-Aram. This reminded him of the vow which he had made on that occasion; and in obedience to that stricter devotion of his household to the Lord's service which his vow imposed, and that he might the more becomingly approach a place to him so venerable, he commanded that all the idolatrous or superstitious figures and symbols which had been found among the spoils of Shechem, or which belonged to any of his people, should be given up to him. Among these were probably the stolen teraphim of Rachel; and mention is made of ear-pendants, intimating that this favourite oriental ornament had already been turned to superstitious uses, probably by being worn as amulets, and bearing the figures of idolatrous symbols—perhaps of the sun or moon. He did not destroy these things, as might have been expected, but buried them secretly under an oak which grew near Shechem. By his direction also his household purified themselves and put on clean apparel; and this is the first recorded instance of the religious use of outward purifications of the person or attire.

They arrived at Bethel in safety, and there Jacob hastened to build an altar to the God who answered him in the day of his distress, and was with him in the way which he went. After this, the Lord appeared to him, and confirmed to him and his heirs the heritage of the promises made to Abraham, and the change of his own name to Israel. On the spot where God then appeared to him he set up another memorial stone, and shed thereon drink-offerings and oil.

Deborah, the old nurse of Rebekah, died during the stay at this place, and was buried with all honour, under an oak, which, from the lamentations made on that occasion, was called "the oak of weeping." Rebekah herself was before this dead; and it was after her death, probably, that Deborah went to Jacob, in order to be with his wives, who were her countrywomen.

No long stay was made at Bethel, and from thence Jacob proceeded southward, to see his father, whom he had left at Beersheba, but who was now in the valley of Mamre, near Hebron. He journeyed slowly, and probably encamped several times on his way, although we read of only one encampment, which was at a place not far from Ephrath [afterwards Bethlehem], where a flock tower, erected by some former pastors, offered its safety and convenience. Such towers still exist, and are still erected. From its summit the desert shepherds hold their watch afar; and within its walls they deposit, in dangerous times, their moveable goods, with their women and young children, if they do not themselves resort to the shelter which it offers. Such are the watch-towers—the Mizpehs—which the Scriptures so often mention.



[Tower in the Desert.]

While Jacob tarried at this place, his beloved Rachel fell in severe labour, and died after she had given birth to a son, on whom, in her sorrow, she imposed the name of Benoni *,—which sad name, but too well calculated to bring to mind the loss he had sustained. Jacob in the end changed to Benjamin †. Here, where she died, Rachel was buried ; and her afflicted husband erected over her grave a tall stone as a monument. This was long after known as "the pillar of Rachel's grave." A modern Moslem structure now bears the name of Rachel's sepulchre.

During Jacob's stay at this place another calamity befel him ; for Reuben availed himself of the opportunities which his father's grief afforded to corrupt Bilhah, the handmaid whom Rachel had given to her husband, and who had borne him two sons. Jacob heard of this shameless act ; but it does not appear that he took any public notice of it, although it made a deep impression upon his mind, even to his dying day, and it cost Reuben his birthright in the end.

Soon after this, Jacob departed from this sad place, and proceeded to join his aged father in Mamre. None of the circumstances of the interview are told, nor know we any particulars of the intercourse between them during the sixteen years they spent together. At the end of those years Isaac died, at what was even then considered the good old age of 180 years. Esau was then present at Mamre, having probably been sent for as his father's last hour approached ; and he joined with Jacob in the last solemn duty of depositing the remains of their parent with those of Abraham and Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. We read not of any difference between them respecting the division of the inheritance. Esau probably, by this time, understood that Jacob did not consider that the old transactions between them disturbed his claim, as the first-born, to a double portion of his father's substance ; and for any other than present advantages, a man of his character was not likely to be much concerned. The previous property which the two brothers had acquired, now increased by their respective shares of Isaac's wealth, was so great, that it was found impossible for them to remain together, as the land was unable to sustain their flocks. They therefore separated peaceably. Esau returned to the land of Seir, leaving Jacob encamped in the valley of Mamre.

The sacred historian, whose example we have followed, conducts the life of Isaac to its close before he commences the long history of Joseph, although its earlier scenes took place not long after Jacob's arrival at Mamre. This story of his beloved son is so intensely interesting ; it is so surprising, and withal so natural ; it is so perfect,—every minute detail bearing so importantly on the ultimate result, that the most simple story in the world might, in one point of view, be taken for a laboured production of such consummate skill as would, in a fiction, immortalise its author's name ; and the whole is withal told with such unaffected simplicity and natural pathos,—that through half the world the story is impressed from very infancy upon the hearts of countless thousands, and its circumstances are in every place as familiar as household words. While

* *Son of my sorrow.*

† *Son of my right hand*, i. e. one dear to me ; but the Samaritan has Benjamim, "*son of days*," i. e. of his father's old age.

the Jew takes pride in the glory of Joseph, and the Christian admires the wisdom and power of God which his history displays, the Moslem is never tired of calculating the personal qualities which he ascribes to him —his form polished as the box-tree and erect as the cypress,—his locks falling in ringlets,—his forehead shining with immortal beams,—his eyebrows arched, and his eyelashes shading his sleepy eyes,—his eyes beaming mildness, the eyelashes darting arrows, — his lips smiling and shedding sweets, his words "dropping honey,"—and his pearly teeth, between his ruby lips, like the lightning playing upon a western sky.

A story thus familiarly known, and which cannot be told in other words than that of the original historian, without great injury to its force and beauty, it does not seem desirable to relate more in detail than may be necessary to carry on the historical narrative, unless when it offers circumstances which seem to need explanation, or which appear calculated to throw light upon the manners and institutions of the time.

There were many obvious circumstances which might concur in rendering the first-born of his Rachel particularly dear to Jacob. He was the offspring of many prayers, his birth had been the subject of unbounded joy, and his father had beheld him as the constant object of maternal tenderness to his beloved wife. When she died, Joseph was also probably the only one of the household who could fully sympathise with Jacob, and mingle tears with him; for to the others Rachel appears to have been more an object of jealousy than love. It seems also that Joseph was distinguished above all his brethren by his wisdom and his engaging disposition, if not by his superior beauty. These causes had their full effect. Jacob did love Joseph exceedingly; and was at so little pains to conceal his partiality, that he bestowed upon him a much finer dress than any of his brothers wore—"a coat of many colours." The other sons of Jacob, some of whom were not much older than Joseph, seem, upon the whole, to have been a wild and headstrong set of men, with less respect for their father than we usually find in the east. They were displeased at his partiality for Joseph; and their consequent dislike of the youth himself grew to absolute hatred when they learned to regard him as a spy upon them, from finding that, on his return home, after having been out with them in the distant pastures, he was in the habit of telling his father about their evil courses. Joseph also began to have dreams, which were easily interpreted to promise to him some future superiority over them all; and these dreams, which he freely related to them, served much to strengthen the aversion with which he was already regarded by his brothers. Even Jacob himself became grave when one of these dreams seemed to intimate, that not only his other sons, but himself, should, at some future day, bow down before Rachel's son. That dream, in which Joseph thought himself engaged with his brothers in binding sheaves in the harvest field *, may possibly intimate that Jacob had begun to follow the example of Isaac in paying some attention to agriculture.

[Binding Sheaves.]

It seems very likely that, while Isaac lived, Jacob was careful to keep his flocks at a distance, under the care of his sons, lest, if his own and his father's were together, Esau, when he came to claim his inheritance, might be led to fancy that his brother had already enriched himself out of Isaac's property.

* The annexed cut exhibits the early Egyptian process of binding sheaves, which was probably not different from that used in Syria.

Be this as it may, it is certain that, whenever we hear of Jacob's flocks and herds, they are always at some place distant from the valley of Mamre. So now, two or three years after his arrival at that place, we find his sons with the flocks northward, near their former station at Shechem. And, as they had been for some time away, Jacob resolved to send Joseph, who was at home, to inquire of their welfare and bring him word again. He went.

When he approached, his brothers knew him afar off by his coat of many colours, and said one to another, "Behold this dreamer cometh!" and, after some conference among themselves, they came to the resolution of murdering him, and of telling their father that he had been slain by some wild beast. "And we shall see," said they, "what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, whose own recent crime against his father made him unwilling to be a party in bringing any new grief upon him, affected a horror of shedding a brother's blood, and proposed that they should rather cast him into a deep pit, near at hand, which had been dug to receive and preserve the rain-water, but which at that advanced season of the summer was exhausted. They agreed to this proposal, with the view of leaving him there to perish; but it was Reuben's intention to return in their absence and deliver him, to restore him safe to his father.

Joseph had not been long in the cistern before his brothers observed the approach of a caravan of Arabian traders, who were on their way to Egypt, bearing to the markets of that already civilized and already luxurious country the spices and perfumes of the distant east. They knew that such parties were always glad to buy up slaves in their way, for the same market; and therefore it occurred to Judah that it would be more profitable to sell him than to leave him to perish, while by thus disposing of him they might get rid of him effectually, without loading their consciences with his death. To this the others readily agreed. They therefore drew Joseph out of the pit, and offered him to the Ishmaelites, who agreed to give twenty shekels weight of silver for him; and, the bargain being completed, they departed with him to the land of Egypt.

Reuben was not a party to this transaction, as he happened to be absent at the time; and he was greatly afflicted, and, according to the oriental method of expressing passionate grief, rent his clothes, when he returned to the cistern to deliver Joseph, and found him not there. He went and told his brothers; but, whether they acquainted him with what had taken place, or left him in the persuasion that Joseph had been killed or stolen unknown to them, we are not informed. We only know that they slew a kid and dipped in its blood the envied dress of which they had stripped their brother when they cast him into the pit; and they sent it to Jacob, saying they had found it in that state, leaving him to judge whether it was his son's robe or not, and to draw his own inferences. He knew the many-coloured coat; and drew, as they desired, the inference, that some evil beast had devoured his beloved son. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, 'For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.'"

Before the sacred narrative follows Joseph into Egypt, it relates a remarkable incident in the history of Judah, which contributes to illustrate the ideas and manners of that remote age, and of the condition of society under which the patriarchs lived.

At some undefined time previous to Jacob's removal to Mamre, Judah had contracted a friendship with a certain native of Adullam called Hirah; and while on a visit to this person he fell in love with the daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah, and married her, and by her had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. When the first of these became marriageable—long after Joseph was sold to the Arabs, his father provided a wife for him in a woman of Canaan, named Tamar; but he died prematurely, being cut off for some unnamed wickedness, without leaving any children by her. Now

a custom of that country and state of life, —which was afterwards adopted into the law of Moses, and operates throughout the Jewish history,—required that what was deemed the greatest of all calamities, the death of a man without children to carry on his name and race, should be obviated by its being made incumbent on the next brother of the deceased to marry his widow, with the understanding that the first-born son of this union should to all intents and purposes be regarded as the son and heir of the man who died childless. This duty was often very unpalatable to those on whom it devolved. It was so to Onan, who, according to this custom was obliged to take Tamar in order "to raise up seed to his brother;" and he, knowing that the issue would not be regarded as his own, took a very criminal method of averting the designed result. For this he died, in some such sudden and marked way as evinced that his death was a punishment from God. It then became the duty of the third son, Shelah, to become the husband of Tamar; but Judah, who began to be afraid for his only surviving son, was glad that his extreme youth justified him in desiring Tamar to withdraw to her father's house, and remain there as a widow, till Shelah should be of sufficient age. She waited accordingly; but observing that her father-in-law made no sign of being willing to let his son discharge the obligation under which he lay, she thought of a plan whereby she might not only remind him of his neglect, but might, perchance, realise that high and happy condition of a mother, after which we have seen all the patriarchal women longing with intense desire.

Judah had lately buried his wife; and after the days of mourning were over he went to Timnah with his old friend Hirah, to overlook the sheep-shearing which was in progress at that place. Tamar being aware of this presented herself to Judah's notice, on the way, in the guise of a harlot, and as such he was betrayed into an unlawful connection with her, whereby, in the end he became the father of two sons. He had promised her a kid, and as security for it left with her *his staff, his bracelets, and his signet ring;* but when he sent the kid, to redeem his pledge, the harlot was nowhere to be found. But three months after he heard that Tamar was with child; and, probably, not displeased at being thus released from his fears about Shelah, at once said, "Bring her forth, and let her be burnt!" She was brought forth: but when she produced the staff, the bracelets, and the signet, with the declaration that the owner was the father of her unknown child, her stern judge was put to confusion: but the first and uppermost feeling in his mind seems to have been, that all this had justly befallen him for withholding from Tamar the husband she was entitled to claim.

Besides the remarkable practice, and the ideas involved in it, on which this transaction turns, the details bring the manners of the time very vividly before us, and evince the antiquity of usages which still exist in the east. The distinctive dress which harlots wear, and which Tamar assumed for the occasion, the idea of leaving a pledge more valuable than the price, to assure the payment of a price; the use of such an ornament as a bracelet, and of such an instrument of authentication as a signet; and, above all, the existence of a capital punishment, and that punishment burning, for criminal conduct in a woman, with the authority assumed by Judah of directing the infliction of that punishment, are all facts of great interest to those who like to inquire into the origin or early history of usages or public notions.

The patriarchal history may here be said to conclude, although the personal history of the patriarchs is not concluded. We are now about to direct our view to scenes very different to those which have hitherto engaged our chief attention. Therefore, although the history of Joseph might be included in the history of the patriarchs,—for he was a patriarch himself, and his father and his brethren still live,—we shall regard him as their harbinger in Egypt, and avail ourselves of the change to conclude this first book of our history.

BOOK II.

THE HEBREWS IN EGYPT AND THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER I.

JOSEPH.

When the Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph arrived in Egypt, they exposed him for sale, and he was purchased for the domestic service of Potiphar, an officer of high rank in the court of the Egyptian king, and chief of the royal police. Instead of repining in his new situation, he applied himself with great diligence and fidelity to the discharge of its duties. These qualities are too rare and valuable in a newly-purchased slave to escape the master's notice. Joseph's conduct engaged Potiphar's attention and won his esteem; and when he moreover found that his slave was blest with singular prosperity in all his undertakings, he raised him to his confidence, and, in the end, he intrusted the management of all his concerns to him, making him steward, not only over his household, but over his lands. In this honourable station—which in the east is one of more authority and power (even when held by a slave) than anything in our own state of society would suggest—the son of Jacob might have been tolerably happy; and doubtless was so, save when his mind wandered to his father and his father's tents.

He had been ten years in the service of Potiphar, and had reached the fine age of twenty-seven years, when it happened that his extreme comeliness attracted the attention of his master's wife. Finding him insensible to her slighter seductions and overtures, she at last came to declare to him plainly her criminal desires; and this she did one day, when all the family were from home, in so very passionate a manner, that Joseph, not deeming it safe to stay and plead, as he had been wont to do, his obligations to his master, and his duty to his God, abruptly withdrew, leaving in her hand his outer garment*, of which she had laid hold.

As might be expected, the love of Potiphar's wife was turned to bitter hatred by this affront, and she resolved to be the ruin of the man by whom her advances had been repelled. The means by which this might be effected would readily occur to the sharp

[Egyptian Lady.]

* This was a kind of narrow mantle or skirt, covering the back and reaching to about the middle of the leg. In the sculptures and paintings of ancient Egypt it is almost always seen as worn by overseers and stewards, and appears to have been a part of their distinguishing dress. From the manner in which the lower part of it only is brought into view, it is manifest that it was only used as the outer covering for the back.

invention of a resentful woman. She raised a terrible outcry; and when those who were within hearing hastened to the spot, she declared that Joseph had made an attempt upon her virtue, but when he heard her cries he fled, leaving behind him his mantle. The promotion of a foreign slave, descended from a class of men hateful to the Egyptians, to the chief authority in the large household of Potiphar, was calculated to raise the envy and jealousy of other members of that household. This the woman knew, and, artfully appealing to feelings so well calculated to make their ears greedy for a tale to his disadvantage, she said, "See, he [Potiphar] hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us."

When the good man himself came home, she related to him the story of the guilty impudence of the "Hebrew servant," with such passionate earnestness of indignation, that no doubt of its truth could be suggested to his mind, especially as the evidence of the cloak lay before his eyes. In most cases an oriental master would, under such circumstances, put his slave instantly to death; and, as Potiphar's resentment must have been all the greater for the esteem in which he had held Joseph, and the entire confidence he had reposed in him, we agree not with those who think that such feelings now operated in preventing him from slaying the slave he supposed so unfaithful, but are rather disposed to conclude that in a country which was so subject to law, and whose government was so completely organised as that of Egypt, no master, not even of Potiphar's rank in the state, was allowed to inflict death even on a slave. The measure he took was to send Joseph to the prison in which the king's prisoners were kept, and which was probably under his own direction as chief of the royal police. Here his "feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron."*

But the horrors of this imprisonment were soon mitigated through the kindness of the keeper, who was won by his engaging disposition and his abilities to release him from his chains and commit all the other prisoners to his charge. As imprisonment has rarely been used among the ancient or modern nations of the east as a punishment *after* trial or judgment, but only to detain men in safe keeping until they have been tried, or until it has been determined what to do with them—it is rather difficult to account for Joseph's long imprisonment of three years, but by supposing it the result of his master's indecision, encouraged by the opportunity, which his official post afforded him, of keeping his slave imprisoned without question or interference from other parties. We have no doubt that, when Potiphar sent Joseph to prison, he intended to take further measures, but many circumstances may be supposed which were calculated to prevent the fulfilment of this intention. We incline to imagine that he soon found cause to suspect the truth of his wife's story; and it is possible that Joseph had given a true account of the matter, which, on further reflection, his master may have been rather disposed to believe. But then, while, on the one hand, he could not inflict a further and final punishment, or bring him to trial—if trial was necessary to a further punishment; on the other, a proper regard to his own peace and honour would prevent him from restoring Joseph to his former place in his household. Joseph was his slave, and he could not liberate him without also relinquishing his property in him, to which, or to the other alternative of selling him, he may have seen objections which we do not see, unless in the desire of keeping close the story of his wife's conduct. He probably therefore satisfied himself with acquiescing in the favourable treatment which Joseph received in the prison from the keeper. It must not be forgotten that this officer was Potiphar's own subordinate, and that he was himself the superior functionary who was responsible to the king for the prisoners; and it follows from this that, when it was found that Joseph's talents for business might be turned to account in the management of the prison, he was still, in fact, serving his old master, and indeed rendering

* Psalm cv. 18. We should scarcely have imagined that fetters *of iron* were thus early in use, but for this express statement.

services of such value as might alone suffice to account for his not being sold or manumitted.

Joseph had been about a year in the prison when Potiphar received into his custody two of his brother officers of Pharaoh's court, the chief butler and the chief cook, who had given the king some cause of deep offence; and he, willing to show them all the attention which his duty allowed, recommended them to the especial care of Joseph.

Anciently, as now, throughout the east, the utmost attention was paid to dreams; and the interpretation of them became an art, in which the ingenuity of many intelligent minds found much mistaken exercise in the attempt to assign a vital meaning to the fantasies of dreamy sleep. Hence every one sought an interpretation of whatever dream made sufficient impression to be remembered; and he became most uneasy for whose dream no interpreter could be found. We shall see many instances of this as we proceed.

One morning Joseph observed that the countenances of the two great officers were more downcast than usual, and on asking the reason they told him that it was because they could procure no interpretation of the singular dreams with which their sleep had been visited. He then desired to hear their dreams; and, knowing their superstitious notions, took the opportunity of hinting that the interpretation of dreams, when they were of any importance, did not depend on rules of art, but, to be true, must be suggested by God, who thus sometimes saw fit to convey warning and admonition. The dreams themselves, being pictures of actual circumstances, are, so far, illustrative of the usages of the Egyptian court. The butler's dream shows how a grape-sherbet (not "wine") was made for the royal drink. He beheld a three-branched vine, full of ripe clusters, which he seized, and pressed their juice into Pharaoh's cup, which he then delivered into the king's hand. Joseph told him that this dream signified that in three days Pharaoh would come to a decision on his case, and would restore him to his former office. "But think on me," continued Joseph, "when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for, indeed, I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

The chief cook was encouraged by this interpretation to tell his dream also. He had seemed to bear on his head three trays;

[Egyptian with a Tray of Meats on his head *.]

the uppermost contained all kinds of baked meats for the king's table. But, as he passed across the court of the king's palace, the birds of air came and stole them from the basket. This dream was interpreted by Joseph to signify that in three days the king would decide upon his case also; but, instead of restoring him to his post, would cause him to be hanged on a tree, where the birds of the air should come and devour his carcase.

All happened as Joseph had been enabled to foretell. On the third day from that the king's birth-day occurred; and we are instructed that even at this early date birth-days were celebrated with rejoicings. Pharaoh made a feast for his great officers; and it being, seemingly, customary for him to distinguish the occasion by acts of grace and favour where they could be worthily bestowed, he now pronounced his decision respecting the two great officers then in

* It will be seen that in this cut the man is in the act of removing the tray from his head, and has knelt down for the purpose.

prison. The chief butler he pardoned, and restored to his place, but, having found no ground for clemency in the case of the head cook, he commanded him to be hanged. To this account the sacred historian adds the significant announcement—"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him."

After this two years passed away, and Joseph still remained in prison.

At the expiration of that time the king of Egypt himself had two remarkable dreams by which he was greatly troubled. It is still usual for the cattle in the hot valley of the Nile, when they are driven to the water, to enter the stream and stand there as long as they are allowed, solacing themselves in the cool wave. Pharaoh thought that he was standing on the bank of the river, when he beheld seven beautiful fat heifers come up out of the water, and feed in a meadow. After a while there came up at the same spot seven of the leanest and most ill-conditioned heifers that the king had ever seen, and stood beside the others on the river's brink; and, in the end, the seven fat and beautiful heifers were devoured by them. The king awoke: and when he again fell asleep dreamed that he saw spring up, on one stalk, seven good and plump ears of corn; and after that sprang up seven other ears of corn, thin, and blighted by the east wind; and by these the first were devoured. As these dreams appeared to have a certain significance and analogy not common in dreams, the king was, in the morning, more than even usually anxious to have them interpreted; but none of the interpreters and diviners—none of the "wise men," who customarily gave the interpretation of his dreams—were able to assign any satisfactory meaning to them; and their failure brought to the mind of the chief butler the dreams of himself and the chief cook in the prison-house, with the exact accomplishment of the interpretation which Joseph had given. Of this he gave the king a brief but clear account: and Pharaoh, happy in the prospect of relief from the unusual trouble of an uninterpreted dream, sent an order to the chief of the royal police to release Joseph, and send him to the palace. When this order arrived, Joseph was just allowed time to shave his head and beard, and change his raiment, and was then hurried off to the royal palace, and presented to the king. The sovereign said to him, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that when thou hearest a dream thou canst interpret

[Egyptian King on his Throne.]

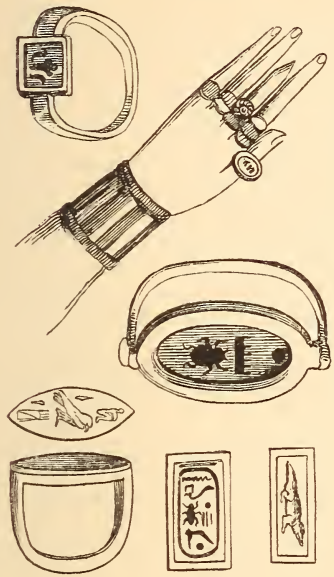
it." But the faithful Joseph, not willing to encourage even a kingly delusion, answered, "It is not in *me:* GOD shall give to Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then the king, without further parley, related his dreams; and Joseph told him that they had both the same signification, which was, that seven years of exuberant plenty were coming, and that they would be followed by seven years of the severest scarcity ever known—so severe that the land would be consumed, and the preceding years of plenty be utterly forgotten. This *principle* of the dreams being explained, the connection of both of them with the river obviously suggested to all who heard the dreams and their interpretation, that the years of plenty would result from an unsually favourable succession of those inundations by which the valley of the Nile is fertilized; and that the ensuing years of scarcity would be caused by the failure of its waters to rise to the fertilizing limit.

Joseph, perceiving at once how the exuberant supplies of the seven fertile years might be so husbanded as to meet the deficiencies of the seven years of scarcity which were to follow, proceeded to state his views in this matter to the king, and advised that some discerning and wise men should be invested with full powers to give effect to the measures which he had suggested. The king, struck not less by the interpretation of his dreams than by the wisdom of the plans by which Joseph proposed to avert the evils which that interpretation threatened, asked the great persons then present, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?"* And on their assent, he addressed Joseph, saying, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house; and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." And then, after a pause, he proceeded more formally to invest him with this high office. He drew the signet-ring from his finger, and placed it upon the finger of Joseph, conveying to him, by that act, the highest powers he could delegate, saying, as he did it, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." He then ordered him to be arrayed in vestures of fine muslin—such as only royal and high persons wore; after which he placed, with his own hands, a chain of gold about his neck. And, it being usual to promulgate with high pomp and ceremony such acts of royal favour, and make known the authority which had been conferred, the king commanded that Joseph, thus nobly arrayed, should be conducted in grand procession through the city, in the second of the royal chariots; and that men should go before him to cry, "Bow the knee."

There is much in all this which is calculated to instruct us in the extreme antiquity of customs which still exist, and of ideas which still prevail in the east. Here we see not only the signet-ring, but its employment as the sign and symbol of authority, delegated by him to whom it belonged and for whom it was made. In those days, when not the manual signature, but the impression of the signet-ring, authenticated every royal act and command, there was nothing, unless a due regard to circumstances, to prevent the holder of the royal signet from doing whatever he pleased in the king's name. Then the dress not only gives the seal of high antiquity to the oriental ideas concerning dresses of honour, but even to that bestowing an office by such a dress, which is not quite abandoned in Europe, and the former prevalence of which is indicated by our very words, "in*vest*" and "in*ve-ti*-iture." The chain or collar of gold is still used, almost everywhere, in courts, as a badge of honour; and, in the higher cases of its use as such, it is even now fastened about the neck by the sovereign hand. Of the procession of honour, analogous examples remain among ourselves—although the public taste is becoming too refined to receive from their imposing circumstances those impressions which, in their institution, they were intended to convey. All these actual circumstances, and others which they imply,

* We wish this to be marked as an intimation that the kings of Egypt were in the habit of asking, at least formally, the consent of their council to the course they proposed.

serve to evince how little this most ancient court was wanting in those conditions of splendour and ceremony with which, in other countries and later ages, the sovereign state



[Signet-Rings of Ancient Egypt.*]

has been surrounded. The whole transaction may be instructingly compared with the account which the Scripture gives † of the promotion of Mordecai by the Persian king.

When Joseph returned, and again stood before the king, Pharaoh more strongly still expressed his own view of the powers he had conveyed to him. "I am Pharaoh," said he, reserving his royal authority; "and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

It has never been unusual in oriental countries for foreign slaves to rise to the highest offices in the state; and there have been countries in which none but such persons could rise to them. But, from the view of Egyptian society which we have been enabled to realise, we are led to suspect that such promotion of a foreigner and a slave could at no time be very usual in ancient Egypt, where all the avenues to power and influence in the state were zealously guarded by the priesthood, which would little brook the intrusion of any one not of their order—much less a foreigner—into the high office which had been bestowed on Joseph. The system may have been less rigid at this time than it afterwards became; but that it operated to some extent we see in the measures which the king—although he already had the consent of his council—deemed it prudent to take, to confirm Joseph in his high place. That his foreign origin might not be constantly presented to the mind of the Egyptians, by his strange, and, to them, barbarous name of "Joseph," the king bestowed upon him the high-sounding and significant Egyptian one of "Zaphnath-paaneah." ‡ And that he might establish him in his position, by securing him the countenance and support of the priestly order—which was indispensably necessary to him—the king got him married to Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, the chief priest of On, better known by its later Greek name of Heliopolis—the city of the sun. This city was in all ages a sort of ecclesiastical metropolis of Lower Egypt—the prime seat of the sacred mysteries and higher science of the country; and was, as such, the fountain from which the Greek philosophers and historians were allowed to draw the scanty information which they have transmitted to us. For these reasons, as well as because the sun, which was there worshipped, was, as in other idolatrous systems, one of the first, if not the chief, of the gods—and in Egypt the rank of the priests was proportioned to that of the gods

* This cut represents different seal rings of ancient Egypt, and are very curious, not only as such, but for the specimens of ancient seal-engraving which they offer. It will be observed that in some of the specimens the stone is a cube engraved on each of its four sides, and made to revolve in the ring, so that any of the inscriptions might be used at the option of the possessor. The hand in the engraving is copied from a mummy-case in the British Museum, and is that of a female. It serves to show the manner in which finger-rings were worn, and the awkward profusion in which they were exhibited by the women of ancient Egypt. The bracelet also illustrates the principal form of an ornament so often mentioned in the Scriptures.

† Esther vi. 4—11.

‡ The revealer of secrets.

to whom they ministered—there can be no question that the priest of On, into whose family Joseph married, was one of the most eminent and influential of his illustrious order. The marriage was, therefore, doubtless a great temporal advantage to Joseph, whatever may be said of it in other respects*. By this marriage Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, before the years of famine came.

Soon after his elevation, Joseph made a progress throughout the land, in order to acquaint himself thoroughly with the materials with which he had to work, and to determine the particular arrangements which might be necessary to give effect to the measures which he contemplated. These measures do not appear to us to have been well understood or appreciated, although considerable attention has certainly been given to them; and they, indeed, deserve the best attention, whether we look upon them as forming, together, one grand operation, the several acts of which were made, with statesmanlike skill, to bear on one another in working out the important result which his view embraced; or whether, without attributing to him so much political foresight as to have seen all the results from the beginning, we confine our attention to the consummate ability with which his course was taken under the circumstances which necessarily arose. There has been much objection, not less to the principles than to the details of his procedure—arising, we are persuaded, from the inveterate habit of measuring all things by our own standard, without adequate reference (if any) to, or allowance for, the very differing ideas which grew up, and seemed reasonable, under other systems of government, and under other public notions than those by which our own ideas are formed and guided. We are far from saying that the proceedings of Joseph are not to be explained or justified by the severe rule of estimate which is formed by the application of our own ideas of government to measures of oriental policy; but we are not willing that Joseph's character as a statesman should suffer in consequence of the application of such a standard to a crude and erroneous view of his position, and of the circumstances under which he proceeded. In our own view, the character of Joseph stands so high, and he appears before us with hands so clear from any taint of political iniquity, that we are willing his conduct should be tried by the severest rule which can be found, as long as the facts of his procedure are thoroughly understood. Brought up at first under the tents of his father, in a spirit of order and combination; and then well exercised in affairs of detail, and in the management of men, while in charge first of a noble household, and then of a prison,—the providence of God had furnished Joseph with more than ordinary training for the high place to which he was now called. Our own task is to detail his proceedings in that place, according to the view which we have taken, and to offer such remarks upon them as may seem necessary; and if the result contributes in the slightest degree to the vindication of one whose public character we highly value, our satisfaction will be very great.

In his tour of survey, Joseph directed the construction of immense granaries in the principal cities, and established proper officers, who were charged with the duty of buying up one-fifth part of all the corn produced during the seven years of plenty, within the surrounding district, the borders of which met those of other districts, for which other cities with public granaries were the centres of collection. The whole land was thus, for the purpose of the collection, divided into districts, probably of nearly equal extent. The corn thus collected was to be stored away in the granaries for use during the years of famine. All

* We know too little of the affair to feel authorized to pass a very decisive judgment upon it. We shall, therefore, only observe that, in the strong remarks which some divines have made on the subject, it appears to have been entirely overlooked that Judah, the only other of Jacob's sons of whose marriage we know anything, married a woman of Canaan, and there is every reason to conclude that all his brothers did the like. It does not appear that any of them went to Padan-Aram for wives; and how far it may have been preferable for them to have married among the descendants of Ishmael, Midian, and Edom is another question.

this was done. And let it be observed that, in originally recommending this plan to Pharaoh, Joseph did not, even to him, propose the aggrandisement of the royal authority as any motive for, or probable effect of, his operations, but only that the people of the land might not "perish through famine."

Those years of famine came at the appointed time. It appears that the dearth was very general, and not by any means confined to the valley of the Nile. Syria, at least, was not visited by the rains, the want of which, in their season, kept back for seven years the fertilizing inundations of that river. When the pressure of the famine began to be felt severely by the people—or, in the strong language of the sacred historian—"When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread." The king referred them to Joseph; who now, understanding that the proper time was arrived, opened his well-filled granaries, and sold not only to the Egyptians, but, with some restrictions, to foreigners, such corn as they required. When their money was all spent, they again came to Joseph, and with that determined manner which the knowledge that there was corn to be had was calculated to give, said, "Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth." The vizier, knowing that the subsistence of their cattle must, under these circumstances, be a matter of great difficulty to them, offered to give them corn in exchange for their cattle. This offer was cheerfully accepted; and Joseph, by bringing the flocks and herds together, and subjecting them to a general system of management and subsistence, was doubtless enabled to preserve them at a less expense to his stores than would otherwise have been practicable. It is on this occasion that we first read of *horses*, which are named among the cattle which the Egyptians exchanged for corn.

By this means the people secured subsistence for another year; but in the year following they had no cattle left to offer for corn. They therefore came to Joseph, and offered—freely offered, be it remembered,—to transfer their lands to the king, and to place their persons at his disposal, provided they were supplied with food while the famine lasted, and with seed to sow the land, when it again became cultivable. Their stipulation for seed to sow the land, in the same breath that they offered to sell their lands and services to the king, seems to us to give their proposition a very different appearance to that in which it is usually represented. Does it not clearly intimate that they expected still to remain in *occupation* of the land? For what cause had they to be anxious about seed, if they had no land on which to sow it?—or what cause, if they expected no longer to derive benefit from the labour they bestowed upon it? One who views himself as one "sold"—a slave or a serf, makes no anxious stipulation for seed to cultivate his master's fields; for he knows well that his master will look to that, and will take care that his lands *shall* be cultivated. When they therefore said, "Buy us and our land," it must be evident that they are to be understood in some such sense as, that, in consideration of their families being maintained during the famine, they would relinquish their freehold right in their lands, but regard the king as supreme proprietor of the soil, and cultivate it as his hereditary tenants or farmers, paying him, in acknowledgment of his claim, such a proportion of the produce for rent as the justice of Joseph might determine. And if their proposition is to be understood in some such way as this, then the same sense must be assigned to Joseph's acceptance of it, in the name of the king, and also to the terms of his answer, echoing their own words, when he said, "Behold, I have bought you, this day, and your land, for Pharaoh." His character has paid too dearly for these words: although the sense in which he really used them, and in which he understood them to be used by the applicants, is, quite conformably to the view we have here taken, evinced by the agreement which he actually made. This was, that they were to remain in occupation of the lands of which Pharaoh had become the sovereign proprietor; and that they were pay to him, as yearly rent,

one-fifth part of the produce, in lieu of all other charges and imposts to which it may have been subject. Thus Pharaoh became the sovereign proprietor of the soil in Egypt, and thus the former proprietors became his tenants—"servants," the text indeed says, for the word "tenant" does not occur in all the Bible; and those whom, from the particulars offered, we recognise as tenants, are called "servants" there. That this is the case in the present instance—and that the people became tenants, paying a produce rent, and not serfs or slaves,—is so self-evident from the terms of the compact, that no agreement or explanation seems needful to make it clearer. And we are to remember, that a tenant in the east—*and more especially in Egypt*—has, even in his worst estate, that of the *fellah*, enjoyed almost a freehold right in his land, from which he could not be removed by the proprietor, and which he might transmit to his heirs, and might even alienate it by gift or sale to a stranger; although, in the last case, he had to obtain the permission of the proprietor and to pay him a fine. The proprietor could only resume the occupation of the land or introduce a new tenant when the last died without heirs*.

If we could be well aware of the position in which those Egyptians stood *before* Joseph's regulation took effect, we should very probably find more and stronger reasons for exonerating the minister of Pharaoh from the charges which have been brought against this part of his conduct. The sovereign in almost every country of the east has, from the most remote times, been regarded as the paramount proprietor of the soil. The tendency of oriental ideas is decidedly to regard him as such: and, even under the Jewish theocracy, God, as the King of the Hebrew people, was mindful to instruct the Israelites that the land was his†, which they held of him as hereditary tenants, much in the same way as that in which, under the regulation of Joseph, the Egyptians held their lands of Pharaoh; the offerings and tithes which they gave for the support of His worship being, in one point of view, regarded as a produce-rent paid to him for the land. It is likely, therefore, that the subject had before this been mooted among the Egyptians, and that they only took this occasion of expressing their acquiescence in a matter which had in former times been talked of and considered. Their doing so *now* had the advantage of giving them the appearance of a claim for subsistence out of the public granaries during the famine: while the substitution of a settled produce-rent, in place of the various and fluctuating, and therefore harassing, contributions which they had made to the support of the government, and for the conduct of wars and public works, may have seemed to them a very adequate compensation for the merely nominal relinquishment of their independence. There can be no doubt that the immediate effect of this measure was to substitute a produce-rent of one-fifth in the place of all other exactions; and that Joseph's acquiescence in *their* plan was acceptable to them, and the terms considered favourable, may be seen from the gratitude with which it was received:—"Thou hast saved our lives," said they; "let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

One who writes on these matters is much tempted to digress into the history of the land tenures of Egypt, as made known to us by Herodotus and Diodorus. But our limits do not render it convenient, nor is it necessary for our purposes, to take notice of more than the book of Genesis specifies. It may suffice to mention, that the facts of these later historians may be easily shown to be in unison with those which our earlier account supplies, while the essential spirit is perfectly the same. It appears, then, that the history of these transactions exhibits the sacerdotal aristocracy as a distinct body of landed proprietors from those with whom Joseph had to deal. Now these proprietors

* Respecting the land-tenure in Egypt, see Reynier, 'De l'Economie Publique et Rurale des Egyptiens,' p. 96, &c.; Heeren, 'Policy and Commerce of Ancient Nations,' sect. iii. c. 2; Silvador, 'Histoire des Institutions de Moise,' iii. 343.

† "The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."—Lev. xxv. 23.

did certainly at a later day, and, from circumstances, we judge it to be sufficiently certain that they did before, farm out their estates to cultivators, or hereditary tenants, who paid them a produce-rent, and were exempt from any charges to the support of the state. This being the case, the people of Egypt, when they offered to give up their property in chief of their lands to the crown, and to become its tenants, had already before their eyes an example of the operation of that system under which they were willing to be placed; and, considering the splendour of the Egyptian court, and the cost of its establishments and undertakings, and the taxation upon the independent landowners which was necessary to support them, we may have reason to more than suspect that they had little cause to feel their condition superior to that of the tenants of the hierarchy, with their single payment of a certain and moderate rent, which rose or fell with the abundance or scarcity of the season. Upon the whole, therefore, while they no doubt knew that their proposition would be acceptable to the king, we see ground to conclude that the operation would on their part be regarded under any circumstances without repugnance.

Among the settled nations of the east, it has always been the disposition to identify the state with the king, and for every one to consider that in serving the king he serves the state; and therefore any regard for the *liberties* of the people is, perhaps, a thing impossible to an oriental. We have no wish to attribute it to Joseph; it being quite sufficient to satisfy us, if the statements which we have offered tend to acquit him of that political injustice which has been laid to his charge. We think he acted fairly;—not unmindful of the king's interests, on the one hand, nor, on the other, desiring to take an undue advantage of the people's wants.

Only two items of the charge against Joseph remain to be noticed. When this bargain had been completed, we are told that, "As for the people, Joseph removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof." Whence it has been most strangely imagined that he removed them from their original seats to distant towns; whereas, it plainly enough means no more than that, having now undertaken to feed the people from his granaries, he desired them to remove from the open country in every district, where all agricultural labour was at a stand, to the cities of these several districts in which the granaries were situated, for the convenience of distributing the corn to them. This was done throughout all the country.

The other charge is, that, while he thus dealt with the people, he took care to court the favour of the priestly aristocracy, with which he was himself connected by marriage, by not interfering with their possessions, but supplying them freely from the public stores with such corn as they required. The answer to this is, that the facts are true, but the inferences wrong. The priests were from time immemorial *entitled* to receive an allowance of provisions from the government, the rents of their lands being applied to the support of the temples and the public worship; and certainly it would not have been just to deprive them of their subsistence when their own lands lay unproductive.

Besides, the priestly nobles filled all the high offices of state, were constantly about the king as his counsellors and companions —the king himself being high-priest by virtue of his office: and, as Joseph must have been assured, the manifestation of any disposition to interfere with their privileges would most certainly be abortive, and would probably be the signal for his downfall; while the kind and beneficent relations which subsisted between the priests and the people, who regarded their lands as a property devoted to sacred uses, would probably have rendered such an interference as little popular with the mass of the Egyptian community as with the aristocracy. Under such circumstances, we see nothing so very blameable in this part of Joseph's conduct.

We have given more space to this matter than the mere wish to justify Pharaoh's vizier would have obtained. But it happens that this justification involves the statement

of illustrative facts and principles which will hereafter, and in various forms, come frequently before us, and which will be much the better recognised and understood from the statement which has now been given.

The desire to preserve the connection of the narrative has led us on to the end of the years of famine. But now, in resuming the history of Jacob, and in connecting it with that of his dear and well-remembered son, we must go back to the second year of the scarcity.

The famine began to be felt very severely in the land of Canaan, when the news came that strangers were allowed to buy corn in Egypt. Jacob heard it, and determined to send his sons to bring a large quantity. He detained with him only his youngest son Benjamin, the only son of his beloved Rachel now remaining to him, and who had succeeded to the place in his father's tenderest affections which his full-brother Joseph had once occupied. Benjamin was at this time twenty-six years of age. Jacob's sorrowful remembrance of Joseph's loss made him reluctant to trust his Benjamin from home, especially on such a journey; "Lest," said he, "peradventure, some mischief befal him."

Among the foreigners who came to buy corn in Egypt were the ten sons of Jacob. It seems that, although the Egyptians themselves could purchase their corn of the officers whom Joseph had appointed for the purposes of the distribution, no strangers could obtain corn until they had received the special permission of Joseph. The sons of Jacob therefore presented themselves at his audience; and now, fulfilling at once the dreams which in their anger they had vainly endeavoured to frustrate, they bowed themselves before him as "the governor over the land." Twenty-two years had passed since they sold him for a slave. He was then a mere lad of seventeen, and now had reached the staid age of thirty-nine; a great change had therefore taken place in his personal appearance, and they could scarcely have known him under any circumstances, much less now, when he appeared before them as a great Egyptian lord, surrounded by every circumstance of honour and distinction, and speaking to them through an interpreter. Little could they think that this was he whom they must have supposed, if alive, to be the slave of some Egyptian master, whose cattle he fed, or to the humblest of whose household wants he ministered. But they were recognised by Joseph; and seeing only ten of them, all of whom he knew, and that the one wanting was he whom, from his youth, he would have guessed to be the son of his mother, he appears to have apprehended that they had sacrificed him also to their jealousy of their father's only remaining favourite. He therefore acted so as to learn from them the prosperity of his father's house, and also the fate of his brother, without making himself known to them. He put on a harsh manner, and "spake roughly unto them," charging them with being "spies," come to see the "nakedness of the land."

To conceive the full force of this charge, and to appreciate the terror and distraction it was calculated to produce, it is necessary to recall the attention of the reader to the operation of the circumstances which have been related in a preceding page *—the reign of the shepherd-race in Egypt, their expulsion, and their settlement in Palestine under the name of the Philistines. The period of their intrusion was still remembered keenly by the Egyptians; and, on their account, every tent-dwelling shepherd had become such an abomination in their sight that they would not even eat with him. For this aversion the oppressions to which they had been subject under this foreign and barbarous rule would alone sufficiently account; but, besides this, the valley of the Nile was bordered by pastoral tribes, who were not only objects of dislike to the Egyptians, on account of the vast difference in their modes of life, but on account of their continual aggressions upon the inhabitants of the more exposed rural districts. Always on the watch for prey and for opportunities of spoliation—we cannot doubt that the Egyptians would regard the pastoral

* Page 31.

tribes around them with that mixed dislike and apprehension of which they are to this day the objects in every settled country to which they are neighbours. Thus, then, while the Egyptians had the general cause of dislike towards the pastoral nomades, they had also the particular cause of having been recently under the iron yoke of a shepherd-race; and, while their experience was calculated to make them suspicious of shepherds generally, they had particular cause to be apprehensive of those shepherds who, after their expulsion from Egypt—with great cost and difficulty—had withdrawn into Palestine, where they had been gathering strength, and had perhaps already made some aggressive forays into the most exposed border-district of Egypt, to which they were still the nearest neighbours. Now Jacob's sons were not only nomade shepherds, but they came from Palestine—from the very borders of that territory which the old Philistine enemies of Egypt at this time occupied. Hence that they were spies, come to seek openings for future aggression, was a most obvious suspicion for an Egyptian to entertain; and the men's hearts must have quaked within them when they heard the charge, and perceived the force with which it bore upon them. They protested their innocence; and, in their anxiety to repel the charge, they entered into a particular detail of the circumstances of their family: in which they afforded him the information he desired—namely, that his father was alive and well, and that his brother Benjamin was at home with him. Anxious to see his brother, and to assure himself that their statement was true, Joseph made his appearance the test of their sincerity:—"Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother; and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies." These repeated asseverations, as observed by Dr. Hales *, indicated strong emotions of resentment at the remembrance of their cruelty; and his conduct in the end proved it, for he "put them all together into ward three days." He made them taste for three days the sufferings he had undergone for three years, and probably in the very same state prison. But the third day his anger cooled, and he reversed the former sentence, and dismissed them all but one, Simeon, whom he kept as a hostage for the appearance of Benjamin. From the tried cruelty of Simeon's disposition, in the perfidious massacre of the Shechemites, he had probably been the most active against Joseph himself.

The remorse of conscience and compunction of mind which they felt on this occasion, and not only felt but expressed in his hearing, not knowing that he understood their dialect, quite disarmed the remaining resentment of Joseph. The trouble of Simeon, and his detention in Egypt, brought, in a lively manner, to their remembrance their dealings with Joseph, and the Egyptian bondage into which they had sold him. And they said one to another—"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben answered them, saying, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Joseph could not stand this. He turned away from them, and wept. But, still firm to his purpose, he returned, and after causing Simeon to be put in bonds before their eyes, he dismissed them; but, as a delicate token of his good will, he restored their money in their sacks, and gave them provision for their journey home.

On their return home, they told their father all that had befallen them. His pathetic comment was—"Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." The offer of the more earnest than sagacious Reuben to undertake the responsibility of Benjamin's safety, with the addition, "Slay

* In this and the following paragraph his condensed account of the circumstances has been mainly adopted.

my two sons, if I bring him not to thee," ministered little comfort to the afflicted patriarch, who persisted—"My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befal him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Thus the matter rested for the time; for as Jacob would not part with Benjamin, and his sons would not go without him, they remained until all the corn which they had brought from Egypt was consumed. Then the question was again opened; and, at last, Jacob was obliged to consent to allow Benjamin to go with them—encouraged, probably, by his confidence in Judah's address and force of character. For he was the spokesman on this occasion, and solemnly engaged to be surety for Benjamin, and to "bear the blame for ever" if he did not restore him safe to his father. Having given his consent, Jacob added such advice as his long experience in the world suggested. They were to take not only the money required for the corn they now wanted, but also the former money which had been returned to them—perhaps by oversight; and, in order to mollify the mysterious "lord of the land," of whom he had heard so much, it would be well if they took a quantity of the choice products of the land of Canaan, which were known to be most acceptable in Egypt,—being balm, wild honey, spices, myrrh, pistachio-nuts, and almonds* — as such a present and tribute of respect as great men were then, as now in the east, in the habit of receiving from those who sought their favour. Last of all, as one still reluctant, he said, "Take also your brother, and arise, and go again unto the man. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

They went, and arrived in Egypt. One morning they made their way to the place where Joseph daily transacted his business concerning the sale and distribution of the corn. When he saw them, accompanied by a youth whom he guessed to be his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother, he directed "the ruler of his house" to take them home to his dwelling-house, and to slay and make ready; for it was his intention that they should dine with him at noon. The steward did as he was ordered, and took them to his master's house. This proceeding occasioned considerable alarm in the minds of Jacob's sons, who thought that perhaps some pretext was sought against them, for making them bondsmen and taking away their asses, in connection with the money which was due for the last supply, and which they had found returned in their sacks. They therefore spoke to the steward, stating how the matter really stood; and he, who probably knew how they were related to his master, and what were his intentions towards them, answered them kindly, assuring them that nothing was on that account imputed to them. He also produced their brother Simeon; and, after having brought them into the house, gave them water to wash their feet, and provender for their asses.

When Joseph came home they brought him their present, and bowed themselves down reverently before him. "And he asked them of their welfare, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?' And they answered, 'Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.' And Joseph said, 'Blessed of God be that old man.'† And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, 'Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?' And he said, 'God be gracious unto thee, my son.' And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." ‡

He then washed from his face all trace of tears, and returned to them, mastering for a while his strong emotions. He commanded dinner to be brought; but as it was an

* For remarks on these products see the notes to the 'Pictorial Bible' on Gen. xliii.

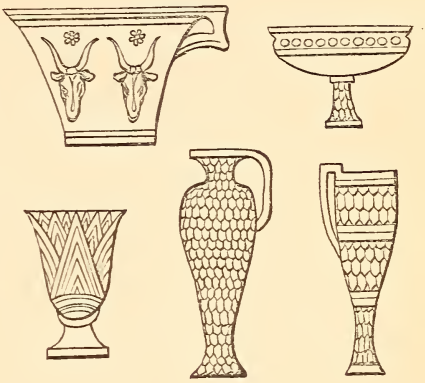
† This beautiful clause is not in the present Hebrew text, but is preserved in the Samaritan and Septuagint.

‡ Gen. xliii. 27—30.

abomination to an Egyptian to eat with a tent-dwelling shepherd, Jacob's sons were seated apart from Joseph and his Egyptian guests. They were also placed according to their seniority, at which they were greatly astonished, for some of them were so nearly of an age, that this discrimination implied a more intimate knowledge of them, in some quarter, than they could suppose that any one there possessed. When the small round tables were brought in with the provisions, Joseph conferred on Benjamin a truly oriental mark of esteem, by heaping the table which was placed before him with five times the quantity of food which the other tables bore. After the dinner they drank wine together and were merry.

[Egyptians at Meat.]

Joseph had one more trial in store for his brothers before making himself known to them. He wished to make their conduct towards Benjamin a test of the present state of their feelings, and of such repentance of their conduct towards himself as would make them shrink from allowing harm to befal one whom their father so tenderly loved. With this view he directed his steward privately to introduce his silver drinking-cup into the mouth of the youngest brother's sack; and when they were at some distance from the city, to pursue them, and, after a thorough search, to bring the pretended thief



[Egyptian Wine Cups.]

back to him. All this was punctually executed: and when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, they were very far from manifesting any indifference—very far from pursuing their way, and leaving him to that slavery in Egypt, to which, in by-gone years, they had consigned his brother. They rent their clothes in bitter anguish, and all returned to the city.

When they re-appeared before Joseph they fell on the ground before him; and not seeing how Benjamin could be cleared from what must seem so plain a case, they only answered Joseph's reproaches by declaring that Benjamin and they were all his slaves. To this Joseph answered that such was not his intention: only he with whom the cup was found should become his bondsman; but as for the rest, they might return in peace to their father. Now was the time for Judah —he at whose proposal Joseph had been sold for a slave, on the one hand, and who, on the other, had become the surety that no harm should befal the son of his father's right hand,—now was his time to redeem his character, and full nobly did he discharge that duty. We cannot give his speech entire, nor need we; for who has not often turned to that most perfect pattern of

natural and affecting eloquence which was ever delivered. It will be remarked that, with great address, he abstains from any reference to the crime. He does not acknowledge it; for that would have been to reflect upon Benjamin: nor does he deny it; for that would have been to reflect upon the justice of Joseph. But all his efforts were directed to move his pity for their father—for that old man of whom they had spoken to him. He touched on every circumstance which could evince the strength of that old man's love towards Benjamin, and dwelt much on the difficulty with which he had consented to part with him. Jacob had said, "Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: And the one went out from me, and I said, surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befal him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." "Now, therefore (continued Judah), when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; . . . and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave." He concluded in announcing the favour he sought, which was, that Benjamin might be allowed to return to his father, and that he might himself remain a bondsman in his stead.

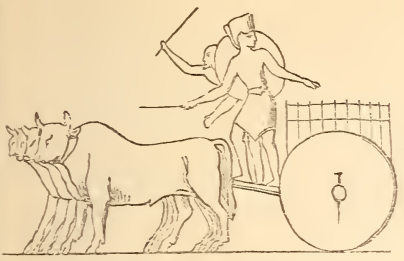
If all this touches us so deeply, how must not Joseph have been affected! He could no longer act a part in such a scene as this,—he could refrain himself no longer, but wept aloud, and made himself known to them, crying, "I am Joseph!"

Who shall adequately realize or describe the profound emotions of that hour! The brethren of Joseph lay dumb before him. The quick sense of their wrong against him, and the dread of his remembering vengeance,—the sensible evidence which they had of the power and splendour of him whom they sold a naked slave to the Arabians,—and the sudden and keen perception that all their old malice against him had but worked out the fulfilment of the high destinies, the mere thought of which had moved their hate and envy, and made *them* heedless of "the anguish of *his* soul," when *he* entreated the mercy which *they* refused:—all this, with the complication of circumstances in which they were now placed, overwhelmed them, and held them mute, in astonishment and remorse.

Perceiving this, Joseph addressed them in words of kindness and encouragement, desiring them to be no longer angry with themselves, but rather to admire the overruling providence of God, through which all things that had seemed evil and hard to bear had worked together for great good to them and to himself. He further opened to them the plan he had in view for their benefit. As the famine was still to continue for five years, it would be best for them to return home and fetch into Egypt their father, with all their households and possessions—that they might all be sustained in comfort near him, and not come to poverty. Being thus reassured, his brethren rose from before his feet; and he kissed them all, and wept upon them.

The rumour had reached the king that Joseph's brethren were come; and it is a pleasing evidence of the esteem in which he was held, and the regard which he had conciliated, that a domestic incident which was calculated to be a satisfaction to him was highly agreeable to Pharaoh and all his court. The monarch sent for him and authorized him to express the kindest intentions towards them, and the utmost anxiety for their welfare. He, as well as Joseph, saw that it would be best for them to come to Egypt, and he had the consideration to direct that they should be well supplied with provisions for the way, and that they should be furnished with carts, in which the aged Jacob, with the women and young children, might pass from Canaan to Egypt with more comfort than by the more ordinary means of conveyance. All this was done; and, in dismissing them for their journey, Joseph gave each of them two suits of raiment, but distinguished his own brother Benjamin by the present of five dresses, with the addition of three hundred shekels-weight of silver.

We may be sure that this journey home



[Carts, from Egyptian Sculptures.]

was performed with much more speed than the former. Then they had to tell their father of one son taken from him, and another demanded; now they had to acquaint him with the recovery of one who had long been lost, and for whom he had never ceased to mourn. Joseph had charged them to tell his father of "all his glory in Egypt;" and so eager were they to tell it, that, as they drew near the camp at Mamre, they hastened on before the carts, and told him—"Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!" At this most unexpected and surprising news, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." They therefore told him all the particulars; and by the time they had done so, the carts had come up to confirm their story. Then the spirit of Jacob revived, and he said, "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

He soon departed; and, on his way to Egypt, paused at Beersheba to offer sacrifices at the altar in that place. There he was favoured with a dream, in which God removed any doubts he might have felt about the ultimate consequences of the important step he was now taking, by assuring him that his sojourn in Egypt was a part of the divine plan concerning his race, which should there be fostered into a great nation, and then brought forth from thence. Thus encouraged and relieved, Jacob proceeded on his way, and at last entered Egypt with his sixty-six descendants*, accompanied, no doubt, by a large retinue of slaves and shepherds.

* These were all his *descendants* who went down with him from Canaan to Egypt. The number *seventy*, given elsewhere, counts in, besides, Jacob himself, with Joseph and his two sons, who were already in Egypt; and the number *seventy-five*, in the New Testament (Acts vii. 14), excludes these, but adds to the sixty-five the nine wives of Jacob's eleven sons, the wives of Judah and Simeon being at this time dead. These results are displayed more largely by Dr. Hales, who derives them from a critical examination and comparison of the passages which bear on the subject.

Joseph, without having as yet consulted the king, had, in his mind, fixed upon the land of Goshen as their future abode—not only as being best suited to a pastoral people, but as being that which the Egyptians would, from various circumstances, be the most willing to see in their occupation. This being a border district in the direction of Palestine, was the first part of Egypt which Jacob reached; and he then sent Judah onward to the capital to acquaint Joseph with his arrival. On learning this, Joseph entered his chariot, and sped to meet his father. They met. Joseph threw himself upon the neck of his dear old father, and wept upon his neck a good while. "Now," said the greatly moved Jacob, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive!"

After the first emotions of this meeting had subsided, Joseph proceeded to explain to his brothers the further measures which were necessary. He intended himself to go and announce their arrival to Pharaoh, after which he would introduce some of them to the royal presence, and they were instructed what answers to return to the questions which the king would be likely to ask. He did not conceal from them that "every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians;" and his instructions were skilfully framed with a reference to that state of feeling.

So he took with him five of the most comely of his brothers, and returned to the capital. He first himself went to the king to inform him that his father's family had arrived, with all their flocks and herds, and were now in the land of Goshen, awaiting his commands. His brothers were then introduced; and, on being asked what was their occupation, they, as they had been taught, answered, that they were shepherds, as all their fathers had been. They added,

that they had come to sojourn in Egypt, for in the land of Canaan the drought had been so severe that they could find no pasture for their flocks; and concluded with a request that they might be allowed to remain among the pastures of Goshen. On this the king turned to Joseph, and told him that the whole land was at his disposal; to place them in the best part of it—in Goshen, if that district seemed the most suitable for them. He also desired him, if among his brothers there were men of sufficient ability, to make them overseers of the royal cattle, an employment which their previous habits and qualifications rendered the most suitable for them.

Joseph's plan for the benefit of his family having thus happily succeeded, he introduced his father also to the king; but whether immediately after or not is not quite clear. The patriarch respectfully saluted Pharaoh, in acknowledgment of the consideration and favour with which he had been treated; and the king, much struck by his venerable appearance, entered into conversation with him, particularly inquiring his age. Jacob's answer was impressive:—"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." After some further conversation, probably, Jacob again saluted Pharaoh, and withdrew from his presence.

We are now to regard the Israelites as in that pastoral district, on the eastern border of the Delta, which the Scriptures call "the land of Goshen:" and it may not be unimportant to note the sound and far-sighted policy which induced Joseph to fix on that district for them, and to procure the grant of it from the king. Reverting to the information already given concerning the shepherd-race, which, not long before this time, had held Egypt in subjection, we may now further remark, that this land, on account of offering the best pasture-grounds in Lower Egypt, had been their principal settlement, and that in which they maintained themselves for some years after they had been expelled from the other parts of the country. Having been not long vacated, and but little wanted by the Egyptians for the pastoral purposes to which it was more properly applicable, it seems to have lain at this time waste and unoccupied. It was therefore a district, the occupation of which by the Hebrews dispossessed no one, and which, from its peculiar character, the Egyptians would see in their occupation with as little ill-will as they were capable of feeling towards a shepherd-race; while its situation on the borders would tend, in a great degree, to keep them apart from the Egyptians, and prevent the disputes and interferences, as well as the idolatrous contamination, which might be expected to arise in any situation which would have involved them more among the natives. There were also circumstances which might have rendered not only tolerable, but highly agreeable, to them, that the Hebrews should occupy this district. "It stretched along the Bubastic, or Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and formed the eastern barrier of Egypt towards Palestine and Arabia, the quarters from which they most dreaded invasion; and the 'nakedness' of which they soon had the satisfaction of seeing in a short time covered by a brave and numerous people, amply repaying, by the additional security and the resources which they gave to Egypt, the hospitable reception which they experienced, and the indulgence which was now extended to them."* These considerations were of especial importance, when Egypt would seem not yet to have recovered the exhaustion which necessarily followed its convulsive efforts to expel the hated race.

The seven years of famine were, in Egypt, succeeded by abundant and seasonable years; for the wonted overflow of the great river was not withheld, and therefore the soil offered all its rich products in great plenty. After having been cherished by his son during the remainder of the famine, the aged Jacob lived to see twelve of these fruitful years. Then, seventeen years from

* Hales, ii. pp. 141, 143.

his arrival in Egypt, the partial failure of his sight, and decay of his bodily powers, gave him warning that the day of his death could not be far off. He therefore sent for his son Joseph, and expressed an earnest desire to lie with his fathers in the cave of Machpelah, and engaged his son to promise, by oath, that his remains should not be buried in Egypt, but carried to the promised land.

Joseph left his father, satisfied with this assurance, and returned home; but he was soon recalled by the intelligence that Jacob had fallen very ill, and seemed likely to die. This time he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. When Jacob heard that he was come, he exerted his remaining strength, and sat up in the bed to receive him; and the cheerfulness and force of expression with which he spoke to him, and, afterwards, to all his sons, shows that the inner lamp continued to burn brightly in him, however much his outward lights and powers had grown dim. He dwelt on the glorious promises of God to him, especially at Bethel, and made mention of the death of Rachel, for whose dear sake—which had first recommended Joseph himself to his peculiar love—he now proposed to give him a very strong mark of his regard. This was, to bestow on him, through his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, a double portion—the portion of the first-born—in that rich inheritance which awaited his race. Properly, they would only divide as grandsons the single share of their father; but he would adopt them among his own sons—and as such they should each receive a full portion, and be counted heads of tribes, even as Reuben, or Simeon, or any other of his sons. As Jacob could not see clearly, he had not hitherto observed that the lads of whom he spoke were present with their father; but now, perceiving that there were some persons with him, and being told who they were, he desired them to be brought nearer, that he might bless them. He kissed them, and embraced them; and said, tenderly, to Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo! God hath showed me also thy seed." In causing them to kneel before their reverend grandfather, Joseph placed the eldest, Manasseh, opposite his right hand, and Ephraim opposite his left; but Jacob crossed his hands, placing the right upon the head of the youngest, Ephraim, and the left upon the head of Manasseh; and when Joseph attempted to rectify what he supposed a mistake, his father persisted, telling him that he acted by the divine direction: and, in proceeding to bless them, which he did with great fervency and devotion, he not only preferred Ephraim to Manasseh, but gave him much the larger and nobler blessing. And how exactly this prophetic blessing of the two tribes, which Ephraim and Manasseh founded, was fulfilled, the ensuing history will show.

After this, the aged patriarch, feeling his strength fail, and that the hour of his death approached, called all his sons together, that he might, severally, by that prophetic impulse which was upon him, tell them "what should befall them in the last days." This he did in a noble poem—the most ancient which any language has preserved—describing the several characters of his sons, and the distinguishing features of their future possessions in the promised land, in language replete with the most beautiful and natural imagery, and alternately tender, pathetic, and stern. With what force and varied images does he, for instance, describe the sufferings and the glory of his beloved Joseph, and pray—

"May the blessings of the heavens from above,
The blessings of the low-lying deep,
The blessings of the breasts and of the womb,
The blessings of thy father and thy mother,
With the blessings of the eternal mountains,
The desirable things of the everlasting hills,
Abound and rest upon the head of Joseph."

Jacob concluded with repeating to all his assembled sons the charge which he had already given to Joseph, separately, concerning his burial in the family sepulchre. He then laid himself down on the bed in which he had hitherto sat up, and gently died. And when Joseph saw that his father no longer lived, "he fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

For a person in Joseph's station not to embalm his father, would have been considered a very heinous omission by the Egyptians, among whom he lived, and to whose general ideas and habits of life he conformed. The necessity of taking the body to Canaan would also recommend the adoption of this process. Joseph therefore "commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father," according to the fashion of the country, and doubtless in the most elaborate and costly of the various processes employed.

As the embalming took a considerable time, it appears to have been customary for the Egyptians to mourn for the dead while this operation was in progress, and till the body was deposited in its sepulchre; but not after that, as in other nations where death was sooner followed by interment. The mourning for Jacob lasted seventy days, and out of respect for the father of Joseph, it was a public mourning among the Egyptians.

After this, having obtained the king's consent, Joseph set forward to take the remains of his father to the sepulchre in Canaan, according to his promise. He was attended, not only by his own and his father's family, but by the chief officers of the royal household, and the grandees of the kingdom, who, in honour to Joseph, bore him company, and took a part in all the solemnities of his father's funeral. The cavalcade consisted of a great number of chariots and of horsemen, so that they made a very great host. The principal persons were doubtless accompanied by their servants and followers, probably with some appearance of military array, for protection on the road. If our frequent preceding statements are right, the enemies they had most to dread were the Philistines, close to whose border, if not through whose country, they must have passed if they had taken the shortest and most obvious route to Mamre; and we imagine that the apprehension of an attack from that people explains a circumstance which no one has taken the trouble to notice, as requiring explanation, namely, that they went a great way about, across the desert, and by the way of Edom and Moab, and incurred the necessity of crossing the Jordan—for some reason which does not otherwise appear. In fact, the latter part of the route coincided with the latter part of that which, two centuries after, the Hebrew host took to avoid "the way of the Philistines." And, as it was, their way, till they entered Canaan, lay through the lands of tribes descended from Abraham and Isaac, who would be likely to respect the funeral solemnity of the patriarch.

After they had passed the Jordan, and had marched about three miles beyond it, into the plain of Jericho, they came to the large open threshing-ground of Atad, which, being level, and inclosed by a low wall, offered a convenient situation for a halt, and for the commencement of those funeral solemnities which they had made so long a journey to celebrate. Hitherto they had been making a journey; now, having entered the land, they commenced the funeral solemnities. During these seven days "they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation;" and in this act the Egyptians were, from their greater numbers and more marked form of wailing, so conspicuous, that, when the inhabitants of the land witnessed the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians;" and hence the place afterwards bore the name of Abel-Mitzraim*. There may have been some policy in commencing the funeral observances so immediately on entering the land of Canaan; for it served to make their object known to the inhabitants, who might else have imagined that so formidable a company came with no peaceable intentions; and, attention being thus early drawn to their object, the people of the country, in all the way they had still to go, would be reminded that the sepulchre, to which the remains of the patriarch were thus honourably conveyed, belonged to a family absent in Egypt.

From the threshing-ground the cavalcade proceeded in solemn march to the vicinity of Hebron, where the sons of Jacob had the satisfaction of depositing the body of their father beside those of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah, in the cave of Machpelah. They then returned to Egypt.

* The mourning of the Egyptians.

While their father was alive, Joseph's brethren knew themselves to be secure; but now that he was dead they felt themselves wholly at his mercy, and concluded that he really hated them in his heart for the wrongs they had done to him, and would not be long in requiting them for their evil deeds. So much more ready was he to forgive than they to believe themselves forgiven; and so hard is it for a generous nature to be understood. They therefore sent a message to him, saying that Jacob, before he died, had told them to send to him, humbly confessing their sin against him, but entreating him to forgive the trespass of *the servants of his father's God.* We incline to think that this was an invention of their own; as it seems far more likely that Jacob would himself have charged Joseph on the subject, if *he* had entertained the suspicion that he still harboured resentment. Either way, the terms in which the message was conceived, and the force of its concluding expression, were well calculated to operate upon Joseph's heart. "If Joseph had been rancorous, this deprecation had charmed him; but now it resolves him into tears."* And when his brothers themselves came in and threw themselves at his feet, crying, "Behold, we be thy servants!" he comforted them and spoke kindly to them, assuring them of his entire forgiveness and continued protection, and directing their attention away from themselves and their offence to the contemplation of that providence of God which his whole history, including that part of it, so strikingly manifested, and of which he himself constantly exhibits the most lively sense.

* Bishop Hall, b. iii. Cont. 6.

Joseph survived his father fifty-four years; but nothing further of his public or private history is told us. He died at the comparatively moderate age of 110 years, but lived to see the great-grand-children of Ephraim and the grand-children of Manasseh. But before his death he sent for his brothers, and, expressing his conviction that God certainly would, as he had promised, lead them forth in due season from that country, and give them possession of their inheritance in Canaan, he strictly charged them not to leave his bones in Egypt, but to bear them away to the promised land, when the time of their departure should come. The usages of Egypt made the accomplishment of this duty easy. His body was embalmed, and kept in a coffin or mummy-case, ready for that day which no man at that time living was destined to see.

To conclude the history of Joseph, it may be as well to add here, that, when the house of Israel at last departed from Egypt, the promise made to him was not forgotten. They took his body with them, committing it to the care of the tribe of Ephraim, who bore about the precious charge many years, in all their wanderings, till they were enabled to deposit it in its appointed place, being that piece of ground near Shechem which Jacob bought for a hundred shekels of silver from the Shechemites, and which he bequeathed a little before his death to his son Joseph. This spot was included in the heritage of Ephraim; and there, in a later day, a noble monument was erected to the memory of Joseph, which still existed in the time of Jerome.

CHAPTER II.

THE BONDAGE.

The history and chronology of the period immediately following the death of Joseph is involved in great obscurity, which there is only some faint hope of seeing dispelled, through the information which is in the course of being painfully collected from the graven monuments of ancient Egypt.

The interval between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses is set down by Dr. Hales at 65 years. The history of this period is given by the sacred writer in a very few words. He commences by enumerating, once more, the sons of Jacob, and then informs us that they and all the men of their generation died before the affliction of the Hebrews in Egypt commenced. Stephen appears to intimate (Acts vii. 16) that they were all taken to be buried in the ground at Shechem, but whether immediately after death, or whether their bodies were kept, like that of Joseph, to be carried thither at a future day, we are not told. The remarkable increase of the Israelites in Egypt is then described with a remarkable amplification of terms:—They "were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." That God had promised this, sufficiently accounts for it: and, acting as usual through natural agencies, he had placed them in a land of abundance, finely watered, and under a warm climate—in a country where the females, both of the human species and of animals, have ever been reputed to exceed all others in fruitfulness. It can also be shown that the children of Israel now married very early, while the duration of life still greatly exceeded that to which it has since fallen. All these circumstances contributed more or less to the important result, and, together, adequately account for it, without the need of that directly miraculous aid which the Jewish writers claim; but which we know was never needlessly employed when the Divine blessing upon existing causes sufficed for the required effect.

There is one matter, concerning which further information than we possess would be very gratifying: this is respecting the precise situation which Joseph's family occupied after his death, and how far it was affected by the high station their father had occupied, and by their maternal derivation from a distinguished family in Egypt. Born in that country and brought up in courts and palaces, under an Egyptian mother, their pastoral relatives from Canaan must at first have been strangers and foreigners to Ephraim and Manasseh. And from this the question arises, at what time, and under what circumstances, the family of Joseph threw aside their Egyptian character, and joined themselves to their pastoral brethren in Goshen. We find no answer to this: but we may be sure that Joseph taught his sons to regard the prospects which that connection opened, as more truly glorious than any which Egypt could offer to them. The intermediate position and parentage of this family was probably for a time made instrumental in confirming the advantages which the Hebrews enjoyed in Egypt; and when circumstances arose which compelled them to take a more determined position, as Hebrews or as Egyptians—if they had not spontaneously done so before — we know, from the result, that they hesitated not to unite themselves to the sojourners in Goshen. All the positive information concerning them which we can find is contained in the genealogies with which the books of Chronicles open. From this source we learn that Manasseh had no children by his wife, but the son of a Syrian concubine was his heir*. The only other circumstance with which we are thus made acquainted relates to the tribe of Ephraim, and is interesting as showing, not only that this tribe entered into

* 1 Chron. vii. 14.

the Bedouin character with great spirit, but as perhaps evincing that the Hebrews in Goshen understood and entered into the Egyptian policy, as against the Philistines, with which the occupation of that land had been assigned to them. A body of Ephraimites, headed by the sons of Zabad, the sixth in descent from Ephraim, undertook a kind of freebooting expedition into the land of the Philistines with the immediate view of driving off the cattle belonging to the people of Gath; but they were resisted by the Philistines and repulsed with much slaughter, and Zabad lost all his sons*. This was exactly such an expedition as Bedouin pastors are at this day prone to undertake; and, considering that it was undertaken in the most bitter days of the "bondage," it lays open certain inferences which we shall presently deduce from it: while it may probably have been entered upon with the view of convincing the Egyptians that no such good understanding existed between them and the Philistines, as appears to have been made one of the reasons or pretences for their oppression.

Towards the latter end of the interval between Joseph and Moses we are told that another king arose who "knew not Joseph." In such a country as Egypt, this, with the resulting consequences, must imply something more than the mere succession of one king of the same family to another,—it must imply a change of dynasty; and not only such a change, but that the new dynasty was not native to that kingdom which Joseph had saved, and the condition of which was still materially affected by the measures he had taken. This has been so strongly felt, that there has been a general disposition to consider that the change consisted in the intrusion of the shepherd-race, to which the king who "knew not Joseph" belonged. But this conclusion is no longer tenable: for a close examination of the historical evidence demonstrates that the shepherd-race had been *expelled* from Egypt before the time of Joseph; and this is confirmed beyond dispute by the graven testimony which the old monuments of that country now offer. The new dynasty must, therefore, be sought in another quarter.

After an anxious survey of the thick clouds which hang over the chronology of this period, for some ray of light which might guide through its utter darkness, we turn away as disappointed as all our predecessors. Nothing, therefore, remains for us but to make such accommodations, and so to balance the various difficulties, as to obtain the result which, without being certain of its truth, seems the best and the most probable under all the circumstances.

It has been our earnest desire to avail ourselves of the facts, few though they be, which the long and well-directed researches of Mr. Wilkinson have enabled him to collect from the graven muniments of Egypt. But it has also been our purpose to use the dates which are assigned by Hales to the principal events recorded in the Scriptures; and how it is possible to use *both* is a question of serious difficulty, seeing that the chronology of Hales differs considerably from that in common use, which Wilkinson has adopted,—from which it necessarily happens that circumstances, which apply very well under the received chronology, lose their Scriptural connection when the dates of Hales are applied to them. To illustrate this by an example. According to Wilkinson the reign of Osirtasen I. commenced in 1740, B.C., and continued for at the least 43 years. Now, according to the common Bible chronology, which Mr. Wilkinson adopts, "the arrival of Jacob"* took place in the year 1706, whence he necessarily infers that this Osirtasen is the "Pharaoh" whom the history of Joseph makes known so favourably to us. But, according to Hales, this date for Jacob's arrival is wrong, and should be 1863; so that then the arrival of Jacob would appear to have preceded the

* 1 Chron. vii. 21, 22. In the text, as it stands, the name of Ephraim has been substituted for that of Zabad in the verse. "And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." It is impossible that Ephraim should then have been alive to mourn over the *seventh* generation of his descendants. Read 'Zabad,' and all becomes intelligible.

* Mr. W. has "arrival of *Joseph*" in both his 'Egypt and Thebes' and 'Ancient Egyptians.' But this is a palpable slip of the pen for *Jacob*.

commencement of Osirtasen's reign by 123 years, whence it would result that this monarch, instead of being the patron of Joseph, and he who gave to the house of Israel a possession in Egypt, would turn out to be the very king that "knew not Joseph," and he who commenced the oppression of the Hebrew race. Here is a very grave difficulty, which is not at all lessened by the fact that "the names and era of the monarchs before Osirtasen I. are uncertain. Very few monuments remain of a date prior to his reign; but the names of many kings occur in the sculptures as his predecessors."*

Now the scriptural dates of Hales are too clearly established, for their relinquishment or modification to be thought of, even for the sake of the benefit which might be derived from the Egyptian facts collected by Wilkinson. Yet these facts are so much more in agreement with the Hebrew history of the time than any information we previously possessed, that, while still adhering to our preference of Hales's dates, we should sincerely regret this consequence of that preference. The only course by which an accommodation could be effected, would be by carrying back the reign of Osirtasen to the time which Hales assigns to the elevation of Joseph; thus erasing the discrepancy of 123 years. To most of our readers this may seem too bold and unwarrantable an operation: but to those who know the uncertainty in which the profane chronology of those times is involved, and the ease with which centuries are bandied about by the chronologers to suit their occasions, nothing would seem easier than to make such an alteration for the sake of accommodating circumstances.

It must not for an instant be supposed that Mr. Wilkinson's collective dates have the authority which they would have, if taken directly from sculptured monuments. This is very far from being the case. His best materials for a chronological table consist of the names of kings, with the duration of their reigns, as given by the sculptures. If we had an unbroken and complete series of these names—if we could be certain that they did not sometimes, like the duration under particular circumstances of royal reigns in the Bible, run into one another,—and if the new branch of learning which involves the right understanding of these inscriptions were in a more advanced state,—it might be easy to obtain some certain results by reckoning the intervals backward or forward from any *ascertained* point. But as none of these conditions are answered; and as, above all, the want of a complete series of these names and eras makes it necessary to help out the calculation by including the estimate of average durations, as well as by introducing an interpretation of the differently interpreted eras of Manetho, a tolerably fair approximation is the most that can be expected. And when we further consider that no fixed point from which to reckon back, in the construction of a chronological table from these materials, occurs earlier than the contemporary reigns of Shishak and Solomon; and that in the backward computation, with the check of the vulgar era for the Deluge, there is the constant disposition to "pare the times to the quick," from the fear, avowed by Mr. Wilkinson, of interfering with that event,—then it may appear that even such a difference as 123 years does not offer an insurmountable obstacle to the adoption of Mr. Wilkinson's historical data. In introducing his chronological table, he says himself, "the contemporary reigns of Shishak and Solomon afford the earliest fixed epoch for the construction of a chronological table; but reckoning back the number of the years of each king's reign, either according to Manetho, the dates on the monuments, or the average length of their ordinary duration, we may arrive at a fair approximation. . . . . But I offer this table with great deference, and shall willingly yield to any opinion that may be established on more positive and authentic grounds."†

Upon the whole, we incline to think it possible that, through the constant operation of a disposition to narrow and keep down the intervals, in reckoning them backward from Shishak, from the fear of ultimately

* 'Egypt and Thebes,' 509, *note.*

† 'Egypt and Thebes,' 506, 507.

getting into too close an approximation with the Deluge, Mr. Wilkinson may very well be supposed to have lost the century which is wanting to make the times of Joseph and Osirtasen synchronise, and to produce a correspondence between the Egyptian and Hebrew history of the ensuing years. The preceding explanation is designed to excuse or justify this assumption, which offers the only available alternative on which we can proceed without entirely foregoing the benefit of that correspondence of events which he has indicated. But this is still a course to which we are rather constrained by the urgency of circumstances, than one which, had any other alternative been open, we should willingly have chosen.

Now then, assuming that, notwithstanding the difference of dates, Osirtasen I. really was, as Mr. Wilkinson conceives, the Pharaoh whom the history of Joseph makes so favourably known to us, we may proceed to state that this monarch belonged to a dynasty of Tanites—taking its name from Tanis, the Zoan of the Hebrew Scriptures. The information concerning this and the other sovereigns whom we have to mention, is derived from the sculptured scenes of war, or of regal, civil, or domestic life, which belong to their several reigns. With respect to Osirtasen I., Mr. Wilkinson observes, "If the name of this monarch was not ennobled by military exploits equal to those of Remeses, the encouragement given to the arts of peace, and the flourishing state of Egypt during his rule, evince his wisdom; and his pacific character satisfactorily accords with that of the Pharaoh who so generously rewarded the talents and fidelity of a Hebrew stranger." It is important to notice that, whereas in former times Egypt appears to have been divided into two distinct states, each of which had its own king, the whole had, in or before his time, been consolidated into one monarchy: for the title, "lord of the upper and lower country," affixed to his name, evinces that Osirtasen was the sole monarch of the Thebaid and Lower Egypt; as does also the presence of his name on a colonnade of the great temple at Karnak. There were two other kings of this dynasty, both of the name of Amun-m-gori; and it terminated some years before the death of Joseph, who may, with great probability, be supposed to have taken the opportunity of retiring from public life; although as the succeeding dynasty was of Memphis, and could not be unacquainted with his services, and with the true character of the circumstances under which the house of Israel obtained a dwelling-place in Egypt, it is not likely that the change made any alteration in their position. Of the kings of these two dynasties, after Osirtasen I., the most remarkable were Amun-m-gori II., in whom the Tanite dynasty terminated, and Osirtasen II., with whom the Memphite dynasty commenced. "Independent of the encouragement given by them to the agricultural interests of the country, they consulted the welfare of those who were employed in the inhospitable desert; and the erection of a temple and a station to command the wells, and to serve for their abode in Wady Jasoos, proved that they were mindful of their spiritual as well as temporal protection. The breccia quarries of the Kossayr* road were already opened, and probably also the emerald mines of Gebel Zabara."† The Memphite dynasty lasted 71 years, terminating 60 years after the death of Joseph, and four years (according to Wilkinson) before the birth of Moses. The next dynasty was of Thebes, and, as such, may be concluded to have been comparatively ignorant of the transactions in Lower Egypt in which Joseph took so conspicuous a part.

The scriptural narrative goes on to tell us that "there arose up a new king [or dynasty] over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." Now this new king is regarded by Mr. Wilkinson as Amosis, the first monarch of this Theban dynasty. He says,—"Amosis or Ames was the leader of the eighteenth dynasty; and the period of his accession and this change in the reigning family strongly confirms the opinion of his being the new king who knew not Joseph. And if we consider that he was from the distant province of Thebes, it is reasonable to expect that the Hebrews would

* Usually spelled "Cosseir."

† 'Ancient Egyptians,' i. 45.

be strangers to him, and that he was likely to look upon them with the same distrust and contempt with which the Egyptians usually treated foreigners. They stigmatised them with the name of impure Gentiles; and the ignoble occupation of shepherds was for the Jews an additional cause of reproach. Indeed, it is possible that the Jews, who had come to Egypt on the occasion of the famine, finding the great superiority of the land of Egypt, both for obtaining the necessaries of life and for feeding their flocks, may have asked and obtained a grant of land from the Egyptian monarch, on condition of certain services being performed by them and their descendants. As long as the Memphite dynasty continued on the throne, this grant was respected, and the only service required of them was that agreed upon in the original compact. But on the accession of the Theban family, the grant being rescinded, and the service still required, they were reduced to a state of bondage; and, as despotism seldom respects the rights of those it injures, additional labour was imposed upon this unresisting people. And Pharaoh's pretended fear, lest in the event of war they might make common cause with the enemy, was a sufficient pretext with his own people for oppressing the Jews, at the same time that it had the effect of exciting their prejudices against them. Affecting, therefore, some alarm at their numbers, he suggested that so numerous a body might avail themselves of the absence of the Egyptian troops, and endanger the safety and tranquillity of the country, and that prudence dictated the necessity of obviating the possibility of such an occurrence. With this view they were treated like captives taken in war, and were forced to undergo the gratuitous labour of erecting public granaries and other buildings for the Egyptian monarch. These were principally constructed of crude brick; and that such materials were commonly used in Egypt we have sufficient proof from the walls and other buildings of great size and solidity found in various parts of the country, many of which are of a very early period; and the bricks themselves, both at Thebes and in the vicinity of Memphis, bear the names of the monarch who ruled Egypt during and prior to the period to which I am now alluding. The crude brick remains about Memphis are principally pyramids; those at Thebes consist of walls inclosing sacred monuments and tombs, and some are made with and others without straw. Many have chopped barley and wheat straw, others bean-halm, and stubble*; and in the tombs we find the process of making them represented among the sculptures. But it is not to be supposed that any of these bricks are the work of the Israelites, who were never occupied at Thebes; and although Josephus affirms that they were engaged in building pyramids as well as in making canals and embankments, it is very improbable that the crude brick pyramids of Memphis, or of the Arsinoïte nome, were the work of the Hebrew captives."

The idea of Mr. Wilkinson, that there was an original agreement for certain services to be performed by Jacob's family and their descendants, is, as far as we know, a new one. We do not think that this, under all the circumstances, as recorded in the book of Genesis, is very likely; unless to this extent, that there was an understood condition,—that the Hebrews were to guard that part of the open frontier committed to them, against the intrusion of other shepherd races, and especially against the Philistines. In fact, although the Hebrews themselves knew, from prophecy, that they were to make a considerable stay in Egypt, and grow there into a nation, it is not clear that the Egyptians themselves had at first any such expectation or intention, and without it they were most unlikely to stipulate for any services to be performed. The family of Jacob came to be nourished during the years of famine; and a district was assigned them, in which they might stay with their flocks and herds. Their longer stay was probably not expected. But when the years of plenty came, the influence of Joseph, joined, probably, to the experience of the usefulness of their presence on that frontier, would prevent the attempt, or perhaps even the wish, to require their removal: and it was only when,—under a

* Exod. v. 12. Some bricks were made by the oppressed Hebrews with "stubble instead of straw."

new dynasty, which cared little for the services which Joseph had rendered to the state,—the length of their stay seemed to intimate that they were likely to become a fixed part of the population, and when the rapid increase in their numbers brought their position strongly before the government,—that any strong measures were taken with them, or any attempt made to exact services from them. The Egyptian government was right in directing its attention to a subject of this importance, with the view of taking such measures as the security of the country might seem to require. But the measures which it did take—however right in abstract policy—were wrong and bad, because they were unjust. The Egyptians had no right to require from the Hebrews any services but such as agreed with their condition as a free pastoral people; and the customs of the east indicate that the only just and proper condition they could have imposed was that of military service, whenever such service might be required. The condition of the Hebrews in Egypt bore much analogy to that of the Eelauts, or wandering clans, of Persia; and we have some plain indications that their character was not very dissimilar—being, in fact, that which belongs to all tribes similarly circumstanced. Persia alone now offers "the anomaly of a large portion of the people with nomadic habits, existing separately from the rest, yet residing in the heart of the community, of which they form a constituent part, *and supplying the principal military force of the country*. . . . . These various tribes are bold and free as their brethren of the mighty steppes, from whom many of themselves are sprung, warlike, rude, quarrelsome, eager for plunder, despising the pacific drudges that occupy the cultivated tracts and cities in the neighbourhood of their wild haunts — wandering, almost at will, over pathless deserts, like the wild ass in his plains—idle and profligate, yet hospitable and generous."* There is good reason to conclude that the bad, not less than the good, points of this most true portraiture belonged to the Hebrews of this period. We grievously mistake if we regard them as a race of innocent and simple shepherds, piping and singing beside the streams, or under the shadow of some tree or rock. Not this, but the very reverse, is the character of the oriental shepherd. And, as oriental shepherds, it is certain that the character of the Hebrews must have offered much which could not but be, and actually was, highly distasteful to the Egyptians: and it is not by any means unlikely that some acts of theirs—very natural to them, but very disagreeable to the Egyptians — may have brought the anomalous position of the Hebrew people very strongly under the notice of a government not disposed to regard their proceedings with that indulgence which they had previously received.

Upon the whole, the matter seems to have been one which really required the best attention of the government. But this is all: for, unless on the ground of necessity, "the tyrant's plea," the measures which were taken admit of no palliation or excuse. They might have been required to vacate the territory which they occupied, and retire into the desert; or the obligation of military service might have been justly exacted from them, not only in the defence of the frontier on which they were placed, but in any war which the Egyptians undertook. To both these courses it appears that they saw objections; and their objections to the last of them may be conjectured from the fact, that the Eelaut tribes of Persia, without relinquishing their own habits of life, have been able to take the government of the country —for the kings of Persia have, for more than a century past, been chiefs of some of those tribes; and the hereditary aristocracy of the country is formed by the general body of those chiefs. Yet the Eelauts of Persia compose scarcely a fourth of its population. This, therefore, while it shows the objections which the Egyptians might have to employ the pastoral Hebrews in their military operations, may convey an intimation that the apprehensions of the Egyptians, however unfounded, were not so entirely chimerical, or so merely pretended, as some writers imagine.

* J. B. Frazer's 'Persia,' 360.

The course which the Egyptians determined to adopt was to remove the anomalous condition, by compelling them to relinquish their mode of life as tent-dwelling shepherds, and to fix them down as cultivators of the soil, in that land which had originally been granted to them for pasturage. It appears to have been also calculated that the severity of the assimilating operations upon a free and proud people, unaccustomed to labour, and hating the pacific drudgery to which they must be reduced, would have much effect in breaking their spirit and in keeping their numbers down. It was in the first place required that they should make bricks, and with them build towns and villages. The principal towns, Pithom and Rameses, were to be strong places, probably intended to be held by Egyptians to enforce the new operations, as well as to furnish secure places to which they might bring, and in which they might treasure up, the proportion of corn and other produce which was to be paid to the king. For this, certain officers were made responsible; and hence it was made imperative on them to enforce the measures by which only the required amounts could be realized. The situation of these "treasure cities" for Pharaoh is not well known; but all accounts agree in giving them a place in the land which the Hebrews occupied. Before, also, the land could be well brought into cultivation, it was necessary to cut canals, to construct dams, and to execute most of the other works which have been already enumerated. Undertakings so hateful as these to a Bedouin people, we know can only be executed by sheer compulsion and under immediate superintendence and control. The Egyptians evidently knew this to be necessary, especially when not only the work but its object was detestable. The execution of the royal orders was therefore confided to men, "task-masters," who were charged with responsibilities which made them exact very strictly the services required. Thus "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all the service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

It is not to be supposed that such a people as the Hebrews, and so numerous as they had now become, submitted very patiently to such measures as these, or that the coercion which was necessary to their execution was unattended with expense and difficulty. Finding this, and observing that the more the Israelites were oppressed the more they multiplied and spread, the king determined to take effectual measures to prevent their increase, and ultimately to ensure their extinction. To this end orders were given to the midwives to destroy all the male children at the birth, preserving the females—probably with a view to their being ultimately employed in the domestic service, or taken into the harems, of the Egyptians, who on more than one occasion appear to have much admired the comparatively fresh complexion of the Hebrew women. But the midwives paid no attention to the command; and when they were charged with this neglect, they excused themselves by alleging that the superior vigour of the Hebrew women left no occasion for their assistance, and withheld the opportunity of obedience from them. On this the enraged king hesitated no longer at a more open exhibition of his murderous design, and commanded his people to see that every male Hebrew child which might thereafter be born was thrown into the river. What horror then hung over the house of Israel, to which the abstract love of offspring was an absorbing passion, and all whose future hopes depended upon and were connected with the possession of a numerous issue! Yet now, at this very time, when men in their weak counsels proposed utterly to root up the vine of Israel, which had already spread out its branches so widely and borne such abundant fruit—now, it pleased God to call into existence the future Deliverer, and to make the very evils to which his infancy was exposed the means of his preparation for that high office which was in a distant day to devolve upon him.

There was one Amram, a son of Kohath and grandson of Levi, who had been blessed

with a daughter, Misraim, and a son, Aaron, before this time of deep affliction came. Another son was born soon after the promulgation of the king's murderous edict. Under that edict those parents who would avoid the greater horror of seeing their new-born babes torn from them, and destroyed by the rude hands of the Egyptians, chose rather themselves to commit them to the broad stream tenderly and with tears. But the infant born to Amram proved so very fine a child, that his mother was struck with a more than ordinary reluctance to allow this office to be discharged. It was postponed from day to day for three months, during which his existence was kept carefully concealed. But at the end of that time, finding that it was not possible to hide him longer, and aware that a discovery would bring ruin upon others who were as dear to her, she determined to resign him to the providence of God. She took one of the common baskets made from the papyrus, and strengthened it, and rendered it impervious to the water by coating it on the outside with bitumen and inside with the slime of the Nile. When the babe had been laid in this frail bark, it was placed among the flags which grew upon the river's brink, and the young Miriam, then about nine or ten years old, was left to watch at a distance, to see what might befall her infant brother.

Now, in the good providence of God, it happened that at this time the king's daughter came down with her maidens to bathe in the river. As they walked along its bank the princess perceived the ark, and sent one of her damsels to bring it to her. When she saw the child, its beauty and its tears touched her heart; and, although she knew that it must be one of the Hebrew children whom her father had doomed to destruction, she determined to preserve it. The little girl, who had now drawn nigh, perceiving that she was moved to compassion, ventured to ask, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And no sooner did she hear the blessed answer, "Go," than she ran to make her anxious mother the happiest of women, by calling her to be the nurse of her own lost child. "Take this child away," said the king's daughter to her, "and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." And only a mother can understand, in all their depth, the feelings of relief and thankfulness with which Jochebed yielded obedience to this command.

When the child needed a nurse no longer —probably when he was about three years of age—he was taken home to the house of the princess by whom he had been saved. The Jewish traditions give to her the name of Thermuthis, and undertake to tell us that she had long been married without being blessed with any child. Therefore, "the good lady did not breed him up as some child of alms, or as some wretched outcast, for whom it might be favour enough to live; but as her own son—in all the delicacies, in all the learning of Egypt. Whatever the court or school could put into him he wanted not."* She gave him the name of MOSES, from some Egyptian words signifying "taken from the water;" and possibly not without reference to the name Amosis which her father bore.

As the young Hebrew, thus in very infancy honoured and distinguished, does not again come under our notice until forty years of age, we may pass the interval in inquiring into the intermediate state of the Hebrew people.

The murderous edict against the infants of Israel does not seem to have continued long in force; but we are unacquainted with the considerations which led to its repeal. It may be that the people of Lower Egypt generally, were not prepared to go to this extent with the court in its measures against the Hebrews, and that the murmurs of their outraged feelings were heard and respected: or it may be that "Thermuthis" had interest enough with her father to induce him to recall his barbarous edict. But as the birth of Moses appears to have taken place in the latter end of his reign, it seems as well to suppose that the accession of a new king was attended with a change of policy towards the Hebrews, which involved the preservation of their children's lives, and

* Hall, 'Contemplations,' b. i. cont. ii.

which to this extent may have been influenced by the sister of the new monarch. We conceive, however, that in resolving to spare their lives, it was determined to make those lives a valuable property to the state. Amunoph I., the new sovereign, bears the character of "a great encourager of the arts of peace;"* which implies that he much engaged himself in the internal improvement of the country. For the works and undertakings, in which such improvements consist, hands were necessary; and as Egypt does not appear, for a hundred years previously, to have been engaged in any important wars which might have supplied the captive hands usually employed in such undertakings, the destruction of the Hebrew children could not but have seemed to the king a prodigal waste of a power which he much wanted and could well turn to profitable account. From a careful comparison of small circumstances, which it would be tedious to state in detail, it therefore appears to us that at that time, or soon after, the order to destroy the Hebrew children was withdrawn, the attempt to assimilate them, or to fix them down in Goshen as cultivators attached to the soil, was also relaxed, though probably not quite abandoned; but that, instead of this, certain proportions of the people were, in periodical rotation, drafted off for the public service, and dispersed in bodies throughout Lower and Middle Egypt, if not to more distant parts of the kingdom, to labour under the inspection of Egyptian officers. It is useless to inquire very minutely into the particular description of their services, or of the places where they wrought, —to ask whether they erected this fabric, or laboured in that quarry or this mine;—it is enough to know that they were employed "in all manner of service" for which human thews and sinews were required. To render their services more valuable, many of them were, according to Josephus, compelled to learn handicraft employments, that they might exercise them for the benefit of their oppressors. And a confirmation of this, and, indeed, of the view we are generally taking, may be found among the genealogical lists of names with which the Chronicles open: for there we are told of one set of families, of the tribe of Judah, who were engaged in the manufacture of cotton, and of another set of the same tribe, who were potters, employed by the king in his own work†. From the same source we learn that one family of this tribe went and settled in the land of Moab, but in the end returned again to Egypt‡—an extraordinary circumstance, only to be accounted for by the recollection of the intense desire with which even the Israelites in the wilderness longed for the plenty and comforts of that rich land, and were with difficulty hindered from returning thither. It is more than probable that many of the Hebrews were also employed in cultivating the crown lands; for it is certain they were employed in agriculture, and the law assumes them to be well acquainted with agricultural operations. And now, while we justly reprobate the unprincipled system under which a free people were thus, by severe compulsion, reduced to servile labour, we must not be unmindful that it was a part of the divine plan concerning them, that they should be broken from their nomade habits and established in a settled community. A large proportion of the laws in the Mosaical code are expressly adapted to this end. And the case being such, it is obvious that their harsh Egyptian training in agriculture and the arts of settled life, must have tended very greatly to facilitate that transition—a transition so rare and so exceedingly difficult, that perhaps nothing less than the strong compulsion now imposed, could have brought them into an adequate state of preparation for it. Thus was every step in the history of this remarkable people —even their afflictions and bondage—made instrumental in working out their special destinies.

As we have already intimated, by the use of the words "periodical rotation," we do not suppose that the same men of the Hebrews were kept constantly employed in the public service. All probability and analogy would rather lead us to conclude

* Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' i. 50.

† 1 Chron. iv. 21, 23.

‡ 1 Chron. iv. 22.

that the whole of the Hebrew population, excepting the women, the chief persons in each tribe, the old people, and those who were too young for labour—which exceptions probably will in most cases amount to about three-fourths of the whole of any population,—were divided into gangs, which served in rotation; the individuals of each gang being allowed to return to their families in Goshen when their period of service had expired, and to attend to their own affairs until their turn came round to take the place of another relieved gang. It will be seen how well this explanation agrees with and illustrates the position which they seemed to occupy in Egypt when the time of their deliverance approached.

Amunoph I. was, according to both Manetho and the sculptures, succeeded by his sister, Amense; but as her husband seems, in her right, to have wielded the regal powers, under the name of Thothmes I., she is passed over by some of the old copyists of Manetho, and in the sculptures her reign is included in his. Now, as the patroness of Moses was the daughter of Amosis and sister to his successor Amunoph, we shall scarcely be thought too bold in hazarding the conjecture that *she* was the very princess who, with her husband, succeeded Amunoph. We have already stated the tradition and the probability that she was married but had no son; and, as a confirming circumstance of identity, it may be mentioned that this Amense and Thothmes I. were themselves succeeded in like manner as they had succeeded Amunoph,—that is, a queen occurs, named Amun-neit-gori, whose reign is included in that of a king, Thothmes II., who appears to have been her husband, suggesting that Amense and Thothmes I. left no son, but were succeeded by a daughter jointly with her husband. Further, the fortieth year of Moses, when he comes again under our notice, coincides exactly with the accession of Amense and Thothmes I.; and this coincidence is not only corroboratory of our conjecture, but helps to throw light upon the circumstances which we have now to consider.

Moses was brought up as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and as such was instructed in all that "wisdom" of the Egyptians which was the admiration and a proverb of all surrounding nations. The value of the education which he received need not be lightly estimated. For let it be recollected that then, and long after, Egypt infinitely surpassed all other nations in moral and physical science, in knowledge and in art; and let it be borne in mind that —"If a philosopher sought knowledge, Egypt was the school,—if a prince required a physician, it was to Egypt he applied,—if any material point perplexed the decision of kings or councils, to Egypt it was referred."* It may, therefore, be reasonably inferred that the information which Moses acquired, and the powers of mind which were in him awakened and cultivated by the education he received, went to prepare him, in no unimportant degree, for the high duties which ultimately devolved upon him; and to this education may safely be attributed much of that superiority of personal and mental character over the men with whom he had to deal, which Moses never fails to exhibit. It may safely be said that no man among the Hebrews was, or could be, so well fitted as he was for the arduous task of forming into a nation a body so disorganised and so depressed in mind and character by long servitude.

As Moses grew up he was well acquainted with the remarkable history of his own birth and preservation, and with the history of his people. He could not be ignorant of the future prospects of the race to which he belonged; and he must have known that their bondage in Egypt was limited to a certain number of years, the term of which might seem to be at no great distance. The objects and views of the Egyptians in their oppression of the Israelites could not but be intimately known to him; and Stephen, speaking on the authority of old traditions†, seems to intimate that the high hope of becoming their deliverer was not a stranger to his heart. Indeed, what we see so clearly, could not be entirely hidden from himself,—that, if they were to be delivered, there was

* 'Egypt and Thebes,' xii. † Acts vii. 23—25.

no man who, from his peculiar position and attainments, seemed so obviously designed and prepared by Providence to act in their behalf. He was forty years of age, when circumstances compelled him to take his course as a Hebrew or as an Egyptian. If, as we have suggested, his Egyptian benefactress had just then with her husband ascended the throne, it may easily be supposed that this event could not but have some effect on his position. They possibly felt that they could no longer, in their public station, and with a view to the condition of the Israelites in that country, continue to him their conspicuous favour and support *as a Hebrew;* and may, therefore, have required that he should submit to a formal act of naturalization and adoption to constitute him legally *an Egyptian.* To this there were, in his place, the highest temptations of honour and grandeur which could well be offered. But Moses heeded them not. He took his part with the despised and afflicted bondsmen. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."*

After this refusal, the court was no longer a place for him. And it then entered his mind to go among the Hebrews†; seemingly, that he might make himself personally acquainted with their condition, and observe whether there was spirit enough left in them to hail the hope of deliverance, and make an effort to realize it. Grievous were the sights he saw. The degradation of the blessed seed of Abraham, his brethren, filled his patriotic heart with grief; while the oppressive conduct of paltry officials, who were set over their burdens, roused him to indignation. These feelings moved him, in one instance, to a deed which determined his future course. Going forth one day, he saw a Hebrew atrociously maltreated by an Egyptian officer, and, kindling at the sight, he interposed, and delivered the Israelite, by slaying his oppressor. Knowing the consequences of a discovery, he hid the body in the sand; and since no Egyptian had witnessed the deed, he concluded that the secret was safe, and that no danger need be apprehended. Hebrews had seen it, but they could not betray him; nay, rather, it seemed likely that so decisive and bold an act, which put him entirely in their power, and evinced his hatred of their oppression, would suffice to manifest to them that, although hitherto brought up with, and living among the great ones of Egypt, he was now ready to take his stand, decisively, with them, and for them. It was, if they so pleased to regard it, the first and kindling act of a revolt against their tyrants, and which, when they understood that he had laid aside his greatness in Egypt for their sakes, was likely, had they but spirit, to draw their attention to him as the man by whose hand God might deliver Israel‡. But they had no spirit: they understood him not. Oppression had already done its work; and of nothing were they so much afraid as of any circumstance which might involve the displeasure of their masters: and so that they "did eat meat to the full," blows were easy to bear, during their times of service, and labour light. There was also a want among them of that sympathy of the part for the whole, which is another natural consequence of an enslaved condition. The individuals who were, from time to time, maltreated, groaned, indeed: their bodies groaned, but not their souls. And the others who beheld it, were only glad it was not their case; and when, in turn, it became their case, endured it, looking forward to their time of holiday in Goshen. Moses himself was, perhaps, the only man of their race who felt an enlarged sympathy for the general body of the Hebrew people. This representation of their case and character is fairly deduced from the various facts, occurring at different times, which bear upon it; and the statement of it now will enable their occasional acts and sentiments, both in Egypt and afterwards in the desert, to be better understood.

Moses had soon occasion to see something of this. The day after that in which he had

* Hebrews xi. 24, 25. † Acts vii. 23. ‡ Acts vii. 25.

slain the Egyptian, he walked forth again, and observing two of the Hebrews striving together, he kindly and gently interposed to reconcile them, saying, "Sirs, ye are brethren: why do ye wrong one to another?" On which the one who was the most in the wrong thrust him away, sharply answering, "Who made *thee* a ruler and a judge over *us?* Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" This was enough to satisfy Moses of their general state of feeling, while it assured him that the manifestation of his own disposition to act for them against the Egyptians, and between them to produce union among themselves, was received with dislike and apprehension, rather than with gratitude and confidence. It is, moreover, likely that this disclosure had taken place in the presence of some Egyptians; and, on all accounts, it was full time for him to look to his own safety. Moses was now, probably, under the displeasure of the court; and if he were still in some favour, he knew that the sovereign could not, with any show of decency, interfere to save a Hebrew from the consequences of slaying an Egyptian—and that, too, under circumstances which offered to the Hebrews an example of insubordination, and was calculated to rouse them to revolt. To understand the full extent of his danger, it should be recollected that the Egyptian laws against those who deprived a man of life were inexorably severe. To slay even a foreign slave was a crime punished with death. How much rather, then, when a freeman was slaughtered; and how much more, still, when an Egyptian was slain by one of a foreign race. So far, indeed, were their ideas in this matter carried, that, to be an accidental witness of an attempt to murder, without endeavouring to prevent it, was a capital offence, which could only be palliated by bringing proofs of inability to act*. Aware, therefore, of the effects of such a disclosure as that which had been made, flight was the only alternative now open to him who had refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He fled. It was well that he fled so soon: for the death of the Egyptian by his hand having transpired, it soon reached the ears of the king, and was probably related to him with every circumstance of aggravation by the jealous courtiers, who may be supposed to have been glad of this opportunity of completing his ruin. The effect was that the king resolved not to screen him from punishment, but gave orders for his apprehension.

But Moses was already beyond the reach of pursuit. He journeyed eastward upwards of two hundred and fifty miles, and only began to deem himself safe when the deserts of Arabia Petræa and both the arms of the Red Sea were between him and the Nile. In the country of Midian, on the remote border of the eastern gulf, the travel-worn and thirsty fugitive sat down, one day, beside a well of water, for refreshment and for rest. Here he met with an adventure very similar to that of Jacob in Padan-Aram. Water was scarce in that region, and the well by which Moses sat seems to have been the common property of the people in that neighbourhood. While he was there, the daughters of Jethro, the sheikh of a Midianite clan, came to give water to their father's flocks. They were busy in drawing water and discharging it into the troughs for the cattle to drink, when the shepherds of other flocks came also to the well, and rudely thrust away the women to serve their own cattle first. Moses, as might be expected from him, flew to their relief, and not only drove back the churlish shepherds, but watered the flocks of the damsels for them. This led to his introduction to the hospitalities of the family to which they belonged; and, in the end, he consented to remain with them, and undertake the charge of the flocks, which he could lead far off, to greener pastures and more abundant waters than could be supplied by the immediate neighbourhood to which the female shepherds were confined. Moses could not be long among them without manifesting the superiority of his character and knowledge; and so much were the family to which he was now attached pleased with him, that Zipporah, one of the daughters, was given to him in marriage; and by her he had, in the course of time, two sons, the eldest of whom

* Diodorus Siculus, i. 6.

he called Gershom*, and the youngest Eliezer†.

Here he remained forty years, forgotten, probably, by both Hebrews and Egyptians, or remembered only as a tradition; and himself but little heedful now of what he had been, or of the high designs which had passed through his mind; and brought up, as he had been, amidst the throng of cities and the pomp of courts, we may easily believe that the solitary deserts and unfrequented vales, to which he now was wont to lead his flocks, had charms for him, by contrast, which he would not willingly have relinquished to return to the scenes and circumstances of his earlier life. That splendid dream offered many points for that meditation for which he had ample leisure: and the various knowledge which his education had supplied gave him ample materials for thought. With the history of his fathers, the patriarchs, whose manner of life was like his own, he was well acquainted; and when his mind turned to the condition of their offspring in Egypt, he could not but feel that the day of their deliverance approached, and looked forth to see from what quarter it might come. But, personally, he had nothing to do with it. They had rejected and betrayed him; and he knew them to be incapable of any exertion to free themselves. Doubtless, God would free them; but after what manner and with what instruments God might work, he knew not. Besides, forty years had made some change in his character, as it does make in the character of all men. "During his long exile, Moses was trained in the school of adversity for that arduous mission which he had prematurely anticipated; and, instead of that flaming zeal which at first actuated him, he at length became '*very meek*, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.' (Num. xii. 3.) And no man, indeed, had greater trials or more occasion for meekness, and his *humility* was equal thereto. His backwardness afterwards to undertake that mission to which he was destined from the womb, was no less remarkable than his forwardness before."‡

We will now note what happened during these forty years in Egypt.

The prince, Thothmes I., at the beginning of whose reign Moses fled from Egypt, reigned twenty-seven years. "Some buildings of his time still exist; but the second of that name has left little to mark the history of his reign. Between these two monarchs appears to have intervened a queen (whom Mr. Wilkinson calls), Amun-neit-gori, and who has hitherto given rise to more doubts and questions than any other sovereign of this dynasty. But whether she was only regent during the reign of Thothmes II. and III., or succeeded to the throne in right of Thothmes I.§, in whose honour she erected several monuments, is still uncertain, and some have doubted her being a queen. The name has been generally erased, and those of the second and third Thothmes are placed over it; but sufficient remains to prove that the small temple of Medeenet Haboo, the elegant edifice under the Qoorneh rocks, and the great obelisks of Karnak, with many other handsome monuments, were erected by her orders, and the attention paid to the military caste is testified by the subjects of the sculptures."‖

Leaving this princess, and the question how and in what character she operated in the reigns of Thothmes II. and III., we may proceed to state that the reign of the first of these princes lasted ten years, and that, consequently, the fortieth year from the flight of Moses fell in the reign of his successor, Thothmes III., who is, therefore, to be regarded as the Pharaoh so celebrated in the history of Israel's deliverance. That deliverance is placed by Mr. Wilkinson in

* Gershom means, "*a stranger here;* because," said Moses, "I am a stranger in a foreign land."

† This name means, *God my help;* "because," he said, "the God of my father hath helped me, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

‡ Hales, ii. 134.

§ We have ourselves already hazarded it as the most probable conjecture, that she was the daughter of Thothmes I. and Amense, and that, as in the previous case, her husband ascended the throne with her under the name of Thothmes II.; the succeeding monarch, Thothmes III., would then appear to have been their son,—which fact would account for the appearance of her name in his reign also. We can see no explanation which seems so fully to agree with circumstances as this.

‖ 'Ancient Egyptians,' i. 52.

the fourth year of his reign. Until towards the end of these forty years, the condition of the Hebrews seems to have remained much as it had been before Moses left. That it had not grown worse, and was such as we have represented it, appears to be shown from the fact that the Ephraimites were in a condition to undertake that expedition against the Philistines which proved so disastrous for them, and to which we have already alluded *. But Thothmes III. appears from the sculptures to have been an enterprising prince both in the arts of war and peace. He was a great improver and builder; —a character which could not but operate unfavourably for the Hebrews by creating a great demand for labour. It may seem, indeed, to have been a sort of rule that the best kings for the Egyptians were the worst for the Hebrews. Heavier exactions upon their services appear to have been made: the tasks required from them were more onerous; and the alternating periods of rest allowed to the several gangs of workmen were probably abridged, if they did not entirely cease. Never was their bondage so bitter—their affliction so heavy as now. Their lot became too hard even for their tried patience to bear any longer. But none of their chiefs seemed disposed to risk the consequences of moving for the deliverance of Israel; and in themselves they found no help. What then could they do? They bethought them of crying to God,—to the God whose promises to their fathers offered a large inheritance of hope. They did cry: and God heard them.

At this time Moses had led his flocks round the eastern arm of the Red Sea into the peninsula of Sinai, and penetrated to the green and well-watered valleys which are involved among the mountains of its central region. He was near the mountain of Horeb, when he beheld before him a thorn-bush on fire, a circumstance not in itself unusual in that region: but the wonder was that the bush continued to burn without being consumed, and without any subsidence of the flame. Moses advanced to view this strange sight more closely; but, as he drew nigh, he heard a voice, from the midst of the burning bush, calling him by his name. Astonished, he answered, "Here am I." Then the voice cried, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The baring of the feet, thus required, was a mark of respect, common to all oriental nations. The voice then said, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face in his robe; for he was afraid to look at God: and thus, barefooted and with veiled face, he stood to receive the Divine commands. The voice now said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey..... Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppressions with which the Egyptians oppress them: come, now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Moses heard this announcement, as regarded himself, with surprised and unwilling ears. "Who am *I*," said he, "that *I* should go unto Pharaoh, and that *I* should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He bowed to the sufficiency of the answer—"*I* will be with thee;" but still was most reluctant to undertake an enterprise, the difficulties of which were well known to him. Great as the difficulty was of dealing with the Egyptians in such a case, *that*, to a man of his knowledge, appeared so much less arduous than the task of securing the confidence and support of the Israelites themselves—slaves in heart, as he knew them to be—and of making them true to their own cause, that the other was quite lost and forgotten in it. Even after he had been told how he was to proceed;—that he was, on his arrival in Egypt, to assemble the elders of Israel, and announce his mission to

* Page 101.

them, with the assurance that they would believe him—his mind still dwelt on this most serious point. "Behold," he said, "they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, JEHOVAH hath *not* appeared unto thee." Then, to give him the confidence he so much wanted, as well as to enable him to vouch to the Israelites his divine commission, the Lord empowered him to work three signal wonders—the first, of turning his rod into a serpent, and of restoring it again; the second, of making his hand leprous as snow, when he first drew it forth from his bosom, and of restoring it again, when he next drew it out; and the third, of turning water taken from the river Nile into blood.

He was also instructed how he was to act with the Egyptians; but, as his proceedings were in strict conformity with those instructions, they will presently come before us in another shape. But Moses was now eighty years of age;—and, although this was probably not more than equivalent to the age of sixty years in our own days, the fire of his youth had subsided; and, accustomed as he had been for forty years to a quiet and solitary life, he felt sincerely reluctant to embark anew in scenes of trouble and difficulty, by undertaking the high but arduous emprise now imposed upon him. The self-confidence of his earlier life had also passed away; and he was deeply sensible of his own inadequacy to meet the requirements of such a task. This he ventured to intimate, dwelling particularly on the fact that he was not an eloquent man, and that his slow and impeded utterance would divest all his statements of any weight which they might otherwise claim. Even the answer, "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say," did not satisfy one who so anxiously desired to be excused; and, without making any more objections, which he found so well answered, he distinctly begged that the Lord would be pleased to transfer his choice to some one more competent than himself for such high service. But the divine purpose was not thus to be moved. He was told that his brother Aaron, who possessed all that eloquence which he deemed so necessary, would come forth to meet him as he approached Egypt, and would be most glad to see him once more; *he* could act as the spokesman of his brother, who, through him, could deliver, with all due solemnity, the messages with which he might be charged.

Moses no longer withstood the divine appointment. His hesitation and resistance had been that of a man who was but too well aware of the heavy duties of the high office to which he was called, and who knew that they must be discharged, and was determined to discharge them. So, henceforth, we hear no more of doubt or difficulty. The youth of his mind was renewed; and, from that day to the last of his protracted life, all its powerful energies were devoted to the deliverance and welfare of Israel.

Now Moses departed from "the mount of God," and returned to Jethro. He made him not acquainted with his high mission, but requested—"Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive." Jethro answered, "Go in peace." But, before Moses went, it pleased God to relieve him from any apprehensions of personal danger from the cause which had occasioned his flight from Egypt, by conveying to him the assurance that all those were dead who had sought his life.

CHAPTER III.

THE DELIVERANCE.

CHARGED with the highest and most arduous mission ever confided to a mortal, Moses departed from the shores of the Red Sea to return to the banks of the Nile. His wife and two sons were with him, riding upon asses. But at the caravanserai, on the way, Moses was threatened with death because he had left his youngest son uncircumcised; and Zipporah, understanding this, and perceiving that her husband was so smitten as to be unable himself to execute the act of obedience, took a sharp flint, and herself performed the operation. She, was, however, so much annoyed by this occurrence, that she returned with her two sons to her father.

As the future Deliverer advanced towards Egypt, Aaron received the divine command to go forth and meet his brother in the wilderness. They met, and embraced each other; after which Moses made Aaron acquainted with all that had happened to him, and the commission which he had received. They then proceeded together to the land of Goshen.

It appears that the patriarchal government still subsisted among the Hebrews, not having been interfered with, or, certainly, not destroyed by the Egyptians. Under this form of government, the chief authority—such as a father exercises over his grown children—was vested in the heads of tribes, and, subordinately, in the heads of clans, or collections of families. As these were generally men well advanced in years, they are called collectively "elders" in the Scriptural history. On arriving in Egypt these elders were assembled, and the eloquent Aaron declared to them what he had heard from his brother, and the errand on which he was now come. They concluded by displaying the marvels which Moses had been authorized to work. The people, who, as we have seen, had already been brought to look to the Lord for their deliverance, recognised in this the answer to their supplications. "They believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Moses and Aaron then proceeded to follow, to the letter, the instructions which had been given in the mount.

They went to the court of Pharaoh, and were probably attended by the more influential of the elders, although we only read that the two brothers entered the presence. It also appears that the mission produced so much excitement among the Hebrews, that many of those engaged in labour left their work to watch the result.

On appearing before the king, Aaron announced that JEHOVAH, the God of the Hebrews, had appeared to them, and had sent them to require the king to allow the Israelites to go into the wilderness, to hold a feast to Him there. Pharaoh was doubtless astonished to receive this demand. He replied, "Who is JEHOVAH, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not JEHOVAH, neither will I let Israel go." But the brothers still insisted on their demand, explaining, more particularly, that they wished the people to go three days' journey into the wilderness, there to offer sacrifices to their God; and intimated that the Israelites might expect to be visited by "the pestilence or the sword," unless they were obedient, which, reflectively, hinted to the king himself that he might expect to be punished if he prevented their obedience. To this the king deigned no answer, but dismissed them with a severe reprimand for putting such wild notions into the heads of the people, and calling away their attention from their work, to which they were all commanded to return.

That same day, the king, affecting to attribute this application to the too idle life which the Hebrews were allowed to

lead, determined to bring down the rising spirit by making their burdens heavier upon them. "Let there be more work laid upon the men," he said, "that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words."

Hitherto, those who laboured in the brick-fields had been furnished with all the materials for their work, not only the clay with which the bricks were formed, but the straw with which they were compacted; but now it was ordered that they should no longer be furnished with straw, but should collect it for themselves, while the same number of bricks should be exacted which they had formerly been required to supply. This was a grievous alteration; seeing that much of the time which should have been employed in making the bricks was now consumed in seeking for straw. And this burden must have become more heavy every day, in proportion as the straw thus hunted up became scarce in the neighbourhood of the brick-fields. It became at last necessary to employ stubble instead of straw. This was a common enough resource when straw could not be easily procured; and old sun-dried bricks, compacted with stubble instead of straw, are at this day found not only in Egypt but in Babylonia. Under all these circumstances the work could not be done—the required tale of bricks could not be given in to the taskmasters.

It appears that under the Egyptian taskmasters there were Hebrew "officers" in charge of each gang of labourers, and who were personally accountable for the work which the gang had to perform—the taskmasters themselves being responsible to the government for the work of larger bodies of Hebrew bondsmen. Yet the Hebrew officers had access to Pharaoh as well as the Egyptian taskmasters, and when he issued any orders respecting the "burdens" of the Israelites, it was his custom to send for both. Nevertheless, the taskmasters finding the required number of bricks was not produced, ordered the Hebrew officers to be beaten, asking the while, "Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?" The ancient sculptures and paintings seem to convey the intimation that Egypt was as much governed by the stick, in ancient times, as Persia or China is now, and the manner of its application appears also to have been similar. That the Hebrew overseers should be beaten was quite natural under such circumstances. They knew that the Egyptian taskmasters could afford them no relief, if they had been so minded; and they therefore repaired in a body to the king himself, to make their troubles known. They complained of the impossible tasks now imposed; and of being beaten for deficiencies which they could not possibly prevent. But the king was inexorable; and, as we imagine, with a design to turn the Hebrew people from their new objects, and to alienate their minds from Moses, he took heed to remind them of the cause of their increased burdens, saying, "Ye are idle, ye are idle: *therefore* ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to JEHOVAH." If his object were such, he succeeded very completely. As they left the king, they met Moses and Aaron; and began charging them as those who were the authors of all the calamities they suffered. Moses did not deem it advisable to make any answer *to them;* but *to God* he represented, with great sorrow, how much otherwise than improved the condition of Israel had been made by the steps which had been taken. In reply, the Lord renewed his promises of protection and deliverance in the strongest and most encouraging terms; and intimated that, since they now saw the inadequacy of merely human means, or of their own resources, to effect this great deliverance, and that the Egyptians would only through compulsion let them go; they should now see with how "a stretched-out arm," and with what "great judgments," He would bring them forth from under the burdens of their oppressors.

Moses repeated all this to the Hebrews. But, "for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage," they heeded him not. In the first instance they had been willing enough to be delivered—they had sighed for deliverance—but then it must be deliverance by miracle, not through any exertion or

any suffering of theirs. They were poor spiritless slaves, as Moses had found them forty years before; and now their chief concern was about having offended the Egyptians, and made their own position worse, through having given their sanction to the proceedings of Moses. And so depressed were they in character and heart, that they shrunk from the degree of exertion and enterprise which must necessarily attend so great an operation, and began to think that their present condition—even the condition of bondage, but with safety and with sufficient food—might be better than that which was offered to them. They said, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians; for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."*

This confirmed the fears which the previous experience of Moses had led him to entertain; and the result was so discouraging to him, that when directed to appear again before the king, and to renew the demand which had been followed by such disastrous consequences, he ventured to propose the very natural objection that since even his own people would not attend to him, how could he expect that the king of Egypt would hearken to him—the rather since he was destitute of the advantages of an eloquent or ready utterance? He went, however, after having been reminded that his brother Aaron, who possessed these qualities in a very eminent degree, had been given to him for a spokesman. At this second interview, the king, as had been foretold, demanded of them whether they could not show some sign or wonder—some miracle—in proof of their commission. On which Aaron threw down his staff upon the ground, where it became a serpent before them all. This gave occasion to perhaps the most extraordinary contest on record. The strange God of the Hebrews required Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart; while the priests of his own gods—who doubtless had their share of profitable interest in the labours of the bondsmen—insisted that this could not be allowed, especially as the assigned reason for the journey was to perform a service for which they would have been stoned if it were performed in Egypt. Under these circumstances, the king concluded that unless this strange God, of whom Moses and Aaron spoke, and from whom they professed to derive miraculous powers, were able to give them the power of working greater marvels than could be effected by his own priests and magicians, who professed to derive their powers from the gods of Egypt, he should be justified in paying no attention to a demand, just in itself, but suspicious and dangerous as viewed through the policy which the Egyptian government had followed. This contest was not provoked or sought by Moses and Aaron: it resulted from, or rather was imposed upon, their acts by the king; for whenever a wonder was wrought, Pharaoh set his "wise men" to do the like. If, by illusion, they succeeded in producing the same appearance, the king was satisfied—his heart was hardened in the course he was pursuing: but if they failed, then his heart was hardened still. Or it may be that the magicians of Egypt, who wrought such seeming wonders "by their enchantments," did so by the profession of superior and deep arts, rather than by the pretension to immediate empowerment from the gods: and if so, the neutralizing effect on the miracles wrought by Moses would be equal or greater, inasmuch as it might then be pretended that his wonders, like theirs, were wrought through his being "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Perhaps it was partly to preclude such a notion that most of the wonders were wrought, not by the hand of Moses himself, but by his brother Aaron, who had not, like him, received an Egyptian education.

These things having occurred to the king, he sent for "the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt." They, by their arts, performed the same marvel, or, at least, appeared to do so. They threw down their staves, of which every one became a serpent.

* This answer is preserved in the Samaritan, but not in our present Hebrew Bibles and the translations from it. That it was given, however, appears from a retrospective reference to it in Exod. xiv. 12.

It is not necessary to suppose that any supernatural influence was exerted, or that any real transformation took place. We may mention generally, that by their transcendent art and their superior acquaintance with the properties of matter, the Egyptian priesthood excelled all the ancients in the production of those effects and illusions which were inseparably and essentially connected with every system of Pagan worship; and by which the well-instructed priests were enabled to beguile and hold in bondage the minds and senses of the ignorant multitudes. While this may account generally for the surprising imitations by the Egyptian "wise men" (who were, unquestionably, members of the priesthood) of the miracles wrought by the hands of Moses and Aaron; their present feat seems particularly easy of explanation when we recollect that ancient Egypt was, as modern Egypt now is, very famous for its serpent-charmers. These personages can and do perform operations with and upon serpents, which still seem prodigious to the uninstructed and almost to instructed minds. At their command their well-trained serpents will seem to sleep, or to become torpid and lie as if dead: they will come at the call of the "charmer," who without fear will keep them hid in the folds of his garment, or allow them to twine around his neck. They are also skilful jugglers, and able with great address to substitute one object for another*. Such men might, without much difficulty, do that which the "wise men" of Pharaoh did; but by which of their many tricks it was effected it is not needful to inquire. They might have brought live serpents, and adroitly substituted them for their staves. And although Aaron's serpent swallowed up the other serpents, showing the superiority of the true miracle over the false, it might, as Dr. Hales remarks†, only lead the king to conclude that Moses and Aaron were more expert jugglers than Jannes and Jambres, who, as St. Paul informs us‡ from Jewish traditions, were the chief of their opponents. This miracle was therefore abortive, with regard to its effect upon the king; and, as the same excellent writer observes, "his incredulity only resembled the incredulity of the Israelites themselves, when the same miracle was wrought before them; and it was not considered as decisive even by the Lord, when he supposed they might not be convinced until the third miraculous sign, as was actually the case§. In both cases, therefore, the reality of the transformation might be doubted by Pharaoh as well as by the Israelites, on the supposition that it might have been the effect of legerdemain."

After this commenced the famous PLAGUES, growing more awful and tremendous in their progress, whereby God designed to make Pharaoh *know* that which he confessedly knew not—that the God of the Hebrews was the Supreme Lord; to give evidence to the world of his power and justice; and so to exercise judgment upon the Egyptians for their oppression of Israel, that the very gods they feared and the elements they worshipped were made the instruments of distress and ruin to them

As it is of some importance to understand the *time* of the year in which these plagues occurred, it may be well to adduce the following statement on the subject from Dr. Hales. It is the most satisfactory we have met with.

"The season of the year, and the commencement of the plagues, is nowhere specified, but both may be collected from the history. The exode of the Israelites, after the tenth and last plague, was about the vernal equinox, or the beginning of April, on the fifteenth day of the first month, Abib (Exod. xii. 6); but by the seventh plague of hail, the *barley* was smitten; but not the *wheat* and *rye* of later growth. For, according to the report of modern travellers, Heyman and Hasselquist, the barley harvest in Egypt is reaped in March, and the wheat in April; and Le Brun found the whole to be over at Cairo upon the nineteenth of April. This agrees with the account of

* M. Dubois-Aymé, 'Notice sur le Séjour des Hébreux en Egypte, in 'Descript. de l'Egypte,' viii. 108. Salgues, 'Des Erreurs et des Préjugés répandus dans la Société,' ii. 255.

† 'Analysis,' ii. 167.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 8

§ See Exod. iv. 8, 9, compared with iv. 30, 31.

Moses, that 'the barley was in the ear,' though not yet fit for reaping; but 'the wheat and the rye were not grown up.'* This judgment, therefore, must have happened about a month before the exode, or in the beginning of March, before the barley harvest, so early as to leave room for the three succeeding plagues; and if we count backward two months, by the same analogy, for the six first plagues, it will bring the first about the beginning of January, or commencement of the winter season; at which time the river was lowest, and its waters clearest."†

The river Nile was one of the chief gods of the Egyptians, and as such was honoured with feasts, and sacrifices, and rites of ceremonial worship. The king went forth one morning to its banks, perhaps to render some act of homage; and was there met by Moses and Aaron, who, after repeating their demand, and being again refused, announced, in the name of JEHOVAH, the act they intended to perform—and the object—"In this thou shalt know that I am JEHOVAH." Then, in the presence of the king and his servants, the prophet lifted up his wondrous rod, and therewith smote the river; and at once its holy and most wholesome waters were changed into blood, than which nothing could be more abhorrent to the Egyptians. All the waters of Egypt were derived from the Nile, and upon all these waters the change operated. Not only were all the numerous canals and reservoirs which were fed by the Nile, filled with this bloody water, but *even that which had been preserved in vessels of wood and stone for domestic use.* This last circumstance is particularly mentioned in the sacred narrative, as if purposely to evince the miraculous nature of the transaction; and has therefore been carefully overlooked by those who have sought to explain this and the other plagues by the operation of natural and (in Egypt) ordinary causes. This calamity continued for seven days, during which all the fish that were in the river died in the corrupted and nauseous waters. Many of these fish were worshipped by the Egyptians; and fish, generally, formed a large and principal article of diet to them. This was, therefore, a great and complicated calamity while it lasted. The Egyptians loathing now to drink that water which they prized beyond all things, and held to be more pleasant and salutary than any other which the earth could offer, began to dig the ground in the hope of finding pure water. They did find it; and this gave the priests an opportunity of imitating the miracle on a small scale. Nothing could be more easy than by chemical means to give a blood-like appearance to the water of some of the wells thus formed, or to water taken from them. But this was enough to satisfy the easy conscience of Pharaoh; and we are told that "neither did he set his heart to this also."

When, therefore, according to their instructions, Moses and Aaron again bore to Pharaoh the message, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me," they were again refused. On which Aaron, under the direction of Moses, smote once more the river; when, lo! the sacred river, together with another of the Egyptian gods —the frog!—was once more made the instrument of their punishment. Myriads of frogs came up from the river, and from all the canals and reservoirs which it fed, and overspread the land. No place was free from them—from the hut of the peasant to the palace of the king. Even though the frogs were a sacred creature, a people so scrupulously clean and nice as the Egyptians, must have been terribly annoyed to find that the unseemly reptiles penetrated to all places, polluting their choicest food and most costly furniture. They found them everywhere—in their ovens, in their kneading-troughs, and even in their couches and beds.

This marvel also the Egyptian priests managed on some small scale to imitate; but as they could do nothing to *remove* the nuisance, Pharaoh began to be somewhat troubled. He sent for Moses and Aaron, and begged them to entreat JEHOVAH to remove the frogs, in which case he would no

* Exod. ix. 31, 32.
† 'Analysis, ii. 167, 168.

longer refuse to let the Hebrews go to render Him sacrifice. Accordingly, at the time appointed by himself, "the morrow," the frogs died away from the houses, the villages, and the fields, "and they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank." But when the king saw there was respite, he again hardened his heart, and refused to let the people go, regardless of the promise he had made.

Therefore Moses and Aaron were commanded to smite the dust of the earth, from which instantly rose myriads of gnats*, or mosquitoes, an insect plague well known to Egypt during summer, but from which the country is free until nearly three months after the time at which this plague must have been inflicted. As these most insatiable and persevering insects form by far the greatest annoyance and distress—because the most unintermitting—to which life, in warm climates, is subject, the prospect of being exposed to it three months earlier than usual, and of being thus deprived of their usual season of relief, must have been almost maddening to the Egyptians—especially when the insects were produced in such multitudes as on this occasion. It seems surprising to find that the priests were unable to imitate this miracle; but, perhaps, the smallness of the object may, in some measure, account for this, as it may have prevented that handling and management to which serpents and frogs were subject. However, this time they confessed that there was something in this beyond their art and power—that it was no human feat of legerdemain, but that they saw in it the finger of a god, or the supernatural agency of some demon. This was, indeed, the only excuse by which they could hope to cover their own failure; and the acknowledgment was of no immediate value, since it did not ascribe the power and the glory to JEHOVAH, the only true God. They were not themselves prevented by it from continuing to attempt their emulative wonders; and the heart of the king remained unmollified.

* See 'Pictorial Bible;' note on Exod. viii. 16, for the reason on which this interpretation, rather than that of "lice," is chosen.

Hitherto, it appears, the plagues had been common to the Egyptians and the Hebrews. We can easily understand that the latter were included in these visitations, to punish them for their participation in the idolatries of Egypt, and for their unbelief. But as this may have contributed to prevent the Egyptians from seeing the finger of the God of the Hebrews in particular, in the calamities with which they had been visited, a distinction was henceforth made, and the land of Goshen was exempted from the plagues by which the rest of Egypt was desolated.

The next plague, being the fourth, is of rather doubtful interpretation. The word by which it is described denotes *a mixture*, whence some suppose that it consisted of an immense number of beasts of prey, of various species, by which the land was overspread†. But it seems better to understand that every kind of annoying insect is intended. In the preceding plague there was one species—now there are many. There are, however, reasons which might suggest that the Egyptian beetle is rather intended. It is not said that the priests even attempted to imitate this plague. But whether so or not, the annoyance was so great that Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and proposed a compromise which had occurred to him—namely, that they should offer to JEHOVAH the sacrifices about which they were so anxious in their own land of Goshen, without going away into the wilderness. But Moses, with great presence of mind and clear truth, replied, that the worship of JEHOVAH required the sacrifice of animals which the Egyptians worshipped, and never offered in sacrifice; and that the Egyptians would certainly rise upon the Hebrews and slay them if any attempt to offer such sacrifices were made in their presence. On these grounds he insisted that the Israelites should go three days' journey into the wilderness, as the Lord had commanded. The king saw the force of these reasons; and while he gave a reluctant consent that they should go into the wilderness, he stipulated that they should not go very

† See the Targum of Jonathan; also Jarchi and Aben Ezra.

far away. In this, and still more clearly in subsequent circumstances, the king indicates his suspicion of the truth—that, under this excuse, the real wish and intention was to ensure the opportunity of an unmolested march to such a distance as might afford the Hebrews an opportunity of making their escape altogether. It is well to be just even to Pharaoh, by thus intimating that the real question before him—as well understood by *both* parties—was not merely the ostensible matter, whether the Hebrews were to be allowed a week's holiday, to go and hold their feast in the desert—but, really, whether the useful and customary services of the Hebrews were henceforth to be dispensed with altogether, and a serious public loss and a great disturbance of existing relations be incurred. This was the Egyptian view of the question; with the further circumstance that there seemed cause to apprehend that the Hebrews, if allowed to acquire an independent position, might ultimately resolve themselves into a very dangerous adverse power on the frontiers—whether in the desert as pastoral nomades, or as a settled people in Palestine. Viewing the matter thus, as the Egyptian king unquestionably did, we may cease to wonder that he "hardened his heart" so often. For we are firmly persuaded that there is not now any state having bondsmen, however acquired, which would consent to part with them, under such circumstances, with much more readiness than did the king of Egypt, or which would require much less urgent compulsions than those to which that monarch ultimately submitted. No doubt the Hebrews had a right to be free, and no one could justly detain them in bondage; but, again, to illustrate the position of that monarch, let us recollect that *he* had not brought them into bondage. They had laboured for a century in the public service; whence the king, or few Egyptians then living, had ever known them otherwise than as bondsmen; and few, if any, Hebrews then living could remember the days when Israel was free.

Moses expressed his readiness to intercede with JEHOVAH for the removal of this plague; venturing to add the caution, "Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more." But no sooner had this calamity passed, than the king, heedless of this admonition, and of his own word, continued his refusal to allow the departure of the Israelites.

This second breach of faith brought down a judgment more deadly than any of those which had preceded. This was a grievous murrain, by which numbers of the different kinds of cattle kept by the Egyptians were slain, while no harm befell the flocks and herds of the Israelites in Goshen. This distinction had been predicted to Pharaoh, and he sent to assure himself whether it had taken place. Nevertheless, his heart still remained unsoftened, and he still refused to let Israel go.

The infliction with which this obduracy was punished consisted of an ulcerous inflammation, of the most painful and violent description, which broke forth not only upon man, but upon such of the cattle as the murrain had spared. As this ulcer appeared upon the scrupulously clean persons of the priestly "magicians," as well as upon others, their humiliation was so great that they slunk from the scene, thus relinquishing even that languid show of rivalry and opposition which they had lately manifested. This was the sixth plague.

The seventh was introduced with unusual solemnity. Moses was charged to make the usual demand of the king—"Let my people go, that they may serve me;" with the addition, "For I will, at this time, send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; *that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.*" The king was further reminded that JEHOVAH could stretch forth his hand, and cut off him and all his people with pestilence: but he had been preserved, that, through these repeated exhibitions, the power of the God of the Hebrews might be evinced, and his name declared far and near. The visitation thus announced, and the time for it fixed,—"to-morrow, about this time," and which came on at the appointed time, when Moses lifted up his rod towards heaven,—consisted of such a storm of hail

as had never before been known in Egypt, accompanied by terrible thunders, and by lightning "that ran along upon the ground." Seeing that rain is exceedingly rare, and hail almost unknown in Egypt, so formidable a hail-storm as this, predicted as it was, was one of the greatest marvels that could be produced in such a climate as that of Egypt. A heavy fall of snow in July would not, in our own country, be so great a phenomenon as a heavy hail-storm at any time in Egypt. And this storm was so heavy, and the hail-stones of such prodigious size and weight, that it killed man and beast, broke the trees, and destroyed the standing crop of flax and barley; the wheat and the rye escaped, as their condition of growth was less advanced. This has already been stated (p. 119). All these effects had been foretold; and the prediction was mercifully coupled with the advice that those who believed, and feared the word of JEHOVAH, should place their servants and cattle under shelter before the appointed time arrived; and the effect which had been produced upon the Egyptians is shown by the fact that many of "Pharaoh's servants" did believe in what must have seemed so exceedingly unlikely, and caused their servants and cattle "to flee into the houses." There was no hail in the land of Goshen.

This visitation was so dreadful that it made considerable impression upon the king, who sent hastily for Moses and Aaron, and plainly confessed, "I have sinned this time. JEHOVAH is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat JEHOVAH (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." Perhaps he sincerely felt and intended this at the time; but Moses, who knew his heart far better than it was known to himself, plainly intimated that he placed no reliance on this promise, although he engaged to obtain an immediate cessation of the storm.

He was right in his anticipation; for when the old demand was renewed, the king repeated his refusal. Then the arrival of an army of locusts was announced, which should destroy every green thing that the hail had spared. In announcing this visitation, mention is made of one very important object of this series of wonders, in addition to those which have been already noticed; this is, that the faith of the Israelites might be confirmed—that they themselves might be convinced of the supreme and universal power of the God of their fathers,—"That thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that *ye* may know how that I am JEHOVAH."

The threatened infliction seemed so appalling to those about the king, after the loss and ruin which the preceding plague had occasioned, that they ventured to remonstrate:—"Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" was the emphatic question which they connected with their advice that the Israelites should be allowed to depart, rather than that such ruinous inflictions should be brought upon the land. If his own courtiers and counsellers were of this opinion, the king could not but infer that, in the course he was pursuing, he was no longer supported by the general opinion of the Egyptian people, who now lamented his obstinacy, and had become desirous that, as the least of many evils, the claim of the Israelites should be granted. After so much time had passed, and so many calamities, one after another, had befallen the whole of the Egyptian people, we may easily understand that the whole attention of both nations was entirely engrossed in watching this great contest, and in speculating on its probable results. Probably all labour was intermitted, save that necessary for present subsistence; and it is not to be imagined that the labour of the Israelites in the public service was now enforced. Released from their burdens, they unquestionably congregated in Goshen, where alone they could be exempt from the miseries which afflicted the Egyptians; and where they would be in readiness as a congregated body, for the simultaneous move which was, on their part, the hoped result of the contest. They could not but have gradually acquired confidence in their God and in his prophet, as they thus sat watching the

progress of events, and witnessed the gathering dismay of the Egyptians.

The king, perceiving the feeling which was entertained by his own people, sent to have Moses and Aaron brought back; and to make their ulterior intentions manifest, he asked, "Who are they that shall go?" and when Moses, in reply, said plainly that their wives, their children, their cattle, and all that they had, must go with them, the king was highly provoked, and upbraided them for their intentions, which, though professedly concealed under the show of holding a feast to the Lord, were transparently manifested, by this demand, to contemplate nothing less than an escape from Egypt altogether. He said that the original demand was that the men only should go, and to that he was now ready to agree; but he would consent to nothing more. On which he commanded Moses and Aaron to be thrust from his presence.

Then came the locusts. Taking for their appearance the very latest date which the history will allow, the arrival was so much earlier than usual, as to render it a circumstance not to be expected in the ordinary course of events; and besides this, it should be observed that, although locusts are common in Arabia, they appear with comparative rarity in Egypt; the Red Sea, forming a sort of barrier against them, as they are not formed for crossing seas, or for long flights. Yet, on the present occasion, the locusts were enabled, by the aid of a "strong east wind," to cross that sea from Arabia; and this is another remarkable circumstance, as the winds which prevalently blow in Egypt are six months from the north, and six months from the south. To those whom reading or travel has made acquainted with the appearance and ravages of these destructive vermin, the notice which the Scriptural narrative here takes of them will seem remarkably striking and true:—"The locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: Very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall there be such. *For they covered the face of the whole earth*, so that the land was darkened; and *they did eat every green herb of the land*, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: *and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.*" As we are told that the locusts ate up every green thing which the hail had spared, the young crop of wheat and rye must be included. This calamity was so very formidable, that Pharaoh delayed not to send for Moses and Aaron. He avowed to them his fault, and begged for one reprieve more. He obtained it by means of a strong north-westerly wind, which in one night so completely swept the locusts away into the Red Sea, that not one could be found in all the land of Egypt. But when relief had thus been given, it appeared that the king would not allow the Hebrews to take their families and flocks, though he was still willing that the *men* should take the desired journey into the wilderness.

Therefore a new and most extraordinary plague was brought upon the land. In this land, where even a cloud seldom throws an obscuration on the clear face of the heavens, there was for three days a thick darkness,—a darkness which, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "*might be felt*," and which, we are told, prevented the people from seeing one another. Considering the rarity of *any* obscuration in the valley of the Nile, and that the sun was one of the chief of the gods the Egyptians worshipped, their consternation may be partly imagined, and is strongly represented in the Scriptural narrative, by their total inaction—no one rose "from his place for three days." All this while the Israelites in the land of Goshen enjoyed the ordinary light of day. As we have no intimation of the agency employed in producing this remarkable darkness in Egypt, while the Hebrews had light in their dwellings, we must be content to leave this miracle in the characteristic obscurity in which, more than any of the others, it is involved*.

This visitation, so well calculated to appal and terrify the Egyptians, compelled the king to relax his previous determination. He now declared himself willing to let the

* Some considerations on the subject may be found in the 'Pictorial Bible,' note on Exod. x. 21.

men and their families go, but he wished to keep the flocks and herds as security for their return. Moses represented that they were going for the express purpose of offering sacrifices to Jehovah, for which cattle would be necessary, and it could not be known till they arrived in the wilderness what number of cattle would be required. Therefore he declared in the most peremptory manner, "Our cattle also shall go with us; *there shall not an hoof be left behind.*" But the proud king was determined not to relinquish this last and only point of security which would remain to him. Moses, perceiving his obstinacy, proceeded to deliver his last and most awful message from Jehovah, which cannot be given in language more condensed or half so expressive as his own:—"Thus saith Jehovah; About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and *all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die;* from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. And *there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt*, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that Jehovah doth make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants [the councillors and nobles then present] shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, 'Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee:' AND AFTER THAT I WILL GO OUT." Such a message delivered in so high a tone did not fail to exasperate the haughty king, who exclaimed to Moses, in sentences rendered abrupt by passion, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in that day that thou seest my face thou shalt die." To which Moses, with most impressive solemnity, only answered, "Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face again no more." He then went out from the presence of Pharaoh in great anger, and withdrew finally from the court to join his own people in the land of Goshen.

His presence was necessary there to make the needful preparations for that departure which he now saw to be close at hand. And here it will be observed that the judgments exercised upon the Egyptians, with the manner in which their own affairs had been made of such absorbing importance, had, for the present, made the Israelites very tractable, and disposed to receive and follow the directions of Moses with attention and respect. It also appears that, after what had passed, Moses was now held in great honour among the Egyptians themselves, and that not only by the mass of the people, but by the chiefs and nobles of the court *. This was natural. Probably they would have made a god of him, if he had been one of themselves and had acted with them or on their behalf.

It had been usual with Moses to announce a plague only the day before it came; but on this occasion four days elapsed, a circumstance which may probably have lulled the fears which the king could not but have at first entertained from the awful threat of one whose words had not hitherto in any one instance fallen to the ground.

Among the Hebrews in Goshen the most important circumstance of this time was the institution of the Passover. It was peculiar to this institution that it was founded to commemorate an event which had not yet occurred, and that so arranged that it was in the act of being celebrated for the first time, at the very instant when the event occurred which it was destined ever after to signalize. The institution was therefore established with a prophetic reference to a coming event—that event being the one of which Moses had spoken to Pharaoh—the destruction of the first-born of Egypt.

More precisely, the Passover was ordained for a perpetual memorial of the deliverance of the Israelites from the destroying angel, when he *passed over* or spared the houses of the Israelites, but destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians.

Each family had been previously required, at the beginning of the month *Abib* (which from henceforth was made the first month

* Exod. xi. 3.

of the sacred year), to take a lamb without spot or blemish upon the *tenth* day of the month, to keep it up, and to kill it on the *fourteenth, between the two evenings**. They were to roast it entire, not breaking a bone of it, and to eat it in haste, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, standing, with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet, and their staves in their hands, after the manner and posture of hurried pilgrims about to set forth instantly upon a long journey, through a dreary wilderness, towards a pleasant land where their toil and travel were to cease. And they were also required to sprinkle the blood of the paschal lamb, by means of a bunch of hyssop dipped therein, upon the lintel, or head-posts, and upon the two side-posts of the doors of their houses, to save them from the destroyer, who, seeing this token, would *pass over* their houses without entering to smite the first-born. When these instructions were delivered, "the people bowed the head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away and did as JEHOVAH had commanded," and waited in their houses for the catastrophe which was to work their deliverance †.

The tremendous night was not long delayed. While the Jews were celebrating this newly instituted feast—at midnight—the destroying angel went forth in a pestilence, and smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, —"from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle." And there was a great cry in Egypt—lamentation and bitter weeping—for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

The effect of this dreadful blow was exactly such as Moses had foretold. The king, his nobles, and the Egyptian people, rose in sorrow from their beds that night. The shrieks of the living, with the groans of those about to die, breaking in upon the stillness of the night—the darkness of which must greatly have aggravated the horror and confusion of that hour—made the people fancy they were all doomed to destruction, and that the work of death would not cease till they had all perished. The king himself was filled with horror and alarm. Without truly repenting his obduracy, he bitterly lamented its effects. It appeared to him that the only method of arresting the progress of the destruction was to send the Hebrews instantly away—in the fear that every moment they tarried would prove the loss of a thousand lives to Egypt. He therefore sent to Moses and Aaron by that very night—that hour—to tell them, "Get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go and serve the Lord as ye have said; *also take your flocks and herds*, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptian people also, says the Scriptural narrative, were urgent upon them, to send them away in haste; for they said, "We be all dead men." In their anxiety to get them off, lest every moment of their stay should prove the last to themselves or those dear to them, the Egyptians would have done anything to satisfy and oblige them. This favourable disposition had been foreseen from the beginning, and the Hebrews had been instructed by Moses to take advantage of it, by borrowing ornaments of precious metal—"Jewels of silver and jewels of gold," with rich dresses, from the Egyptians. On the principle that, "all that a man hath he will give for his life," there can be no doubt but that, under circumstances which made them consider their own lives in jeopardy, and when the losses they had sustained were calculated to make their finery seem of small value in their sight, the Egyptians were quite as ready to lend as the Hebrews to borrow. The women also were authorized to borrow from the Egyptian females: and we may easily believe that their exertions added much to the large amount of valuable property which was extracted from the fears of the Egyptians. With whatever understanding these valuable articles were given and received, the ultimate effect is, that in this final settlement the Hebrews received something like wages—though, as such, inade-

* The former of which began at the ninth hour, and the latter at the twelfth, or sunset.

† Exod. xii. The clear though very brief account of the institution which we have given is, with slight alterations, from Hales, ii. 190.

[Ornaments of Egyptian Females. "Jewels of gold and jewels of silver."]

quate—for the long services they had rendered to the Egyptians.

So eager were the Egyptians to get them off, that, between persuasions, bribery, and gentle compulsion, the whole body had commenced its march before daybreak, although it was not till midnight that the first-born had been slain. They had no time even to bake the bread for which the dough was ready; and they were, therefore, obliged to leave it in their dough bags, which they carried away, wrapped up in their clothes, with the view of preparing their bread when an opportunity might be offered by their first halt. Hurried as they were, they forgot not the bones of Joseph, which they had kept at hand, and now bore away with them. On they marched, driving before them their cattle and their beasts of burden, laden with their moveables and tents; and themselves, some, doubtless, riding on camels, some on asses; but, from the great number of these required for the women and the children, most of the men doubtless marched on foot. Thus, laden with the spoils of Egypt, they went on their way rejoicing, leaving the Egyptians to the things which belong to mourning and the grave.

We are told that the number of the Israelites who on this eventful night commenced their march was "about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children." The description of men on foot denotes, as elsewhere appears, men fit to bear arms, excluding therefore not only those who are too young, but those who are too old for such service. As this prime class of the community is usually in the proportion of one-fourth of the whole population, the result would give nearly two millions and a half as the number of the posterity of Jacob. This number is so very high, that it has seemed incredible to many. We must confess, that it is difficult to realise the presence of so vast a host, with their flocks and herds, and to form an idea of the immense area they would cover, were only standing-room given to them, much more where encamped under tents;—and when we further consider the length and breadth of their moving body on a march, as well as the quantities of water they would require, we may be tempted to conclude that a much smaller number would amply justify the promises of God, and would render many circumstances in the ensuing portion of their history more easy to be understood. Beside this, the ancient manner of notation afforded temptations and facilities for the corruption of numbers, whence it happens that the most disputed texts of Scripture, and those in which, as the copies now stand, there are palpable contradictions, are those which contain numerical statements. We are not

insensible to these considerations, and have endeavoured to assign them all the weight which they are entitled to bear. But seeing that the present number, high as it is, has some support from collateral evidence, and from the considerations to which we have already adverted, and, above all, reflecting that the present number is a positive circumstance, whereas all alteration could only be conjectural, we deem it the best and safest course to take the number as we find it in the present copies of the Pentateuch. But besides the descendants of Jacob, there was a large "mixed multitude," which went out of Egypt on this occasion. Who they were is not clearly stated; but it would appear that the mass was formed of foreign slaves, belonging to the principal persons among the Hebrews, with a good number, probably, belonging to the Egyptians, who were glad to take the opportunity of escaping with the Israelites. Besides this, there were manifestly a considerable number of Egyptians of the poorer class, who perhaps expected to better their condition in some way, or had other very good reasons for leaving Egypt: indeed, as it did not turn out that the Israelites were anything the better for their presence, we are free to confess that we think it likely they were chiefly such thieves, vagabonds, adventurers, and debtors as could no longer stay safely in Egypt.

The circumstance that Moses was so well acquainted with the number of the Israelites before they left Egypt, intimates that an account of their numbers had not long before been taken by the Egyptians. That ingenious people employed very early, if they did not invent, the practice of taking a census of what is called the effective part of the population; and from them, unquestionably, the Israelites, under the direction of Moses, adopted this useful custom. In all such enumerations, in ancient times, the women and children were not included, and their number is never stated. But probably they were able to form an estimate of the proportion which the numbered part of the population bore to the whole; although their conclusions in this matter must have been more uncertain than our own, which have been founded on repeated actual enumerations of portions of the entire population which were never included in the ancient enumerations.

The point from which the Hebrew host started on their march was Rameses, one of the "treasure cities" which they had built for Pharaoh in the land of Goshen, and which seems to have become the chief place in the territory they occupied. The difficulties in tracing their march begin at the very first stage. There are two preliminary questions, satisfactory information on which would much assist us in understanding the early part of their journey. The first is, the situation of Rameses, from which they started; and the second, the point to which their journey was, in the first instance, directed. On the first point no very satisfactory information can be obtained. It is, indeed, not quite clear that any particular locality is intended, or whether the land of Goshen, in the large indefinite sense, may not be denoted by "the land of Rameses." But some information is reflected upon the first by the answer to the second of these questions, which answer is, that the destination which was in the first instance contemplated, was doubtless the wilderness of Sinai. The land of Goshen appears most evidently to have bordered on, if it did not include, part of the tract over which the nearest and most convenient road to the peninsula of Sinai from the banks of the Nile has always passed. This is nearly the line in which, in after ages, a canal was made connecting the Nile with the Gulf of Suez; and that, while it is the nearest route, it is the only one which offers a supply of water, is a consideration which doubtless as much recommended it in ancient times to those going from Egypt to Sinai or Arabia, as it does now recommend it to the great caravan of pilgrimage which yearly journeys from Cairo to Mecca. The route of this caravan is the same, as far as the head of the Gulf of Suez, as one would take which proceeds to the Desert of Sinai. We shall therefore presume that this *was* the route taken.

If the Hebrews were to have gone direct to take possession of the Promised Land,

their nearest road would have been "through the way of the land of the Philistines;" that is, by the usual route from Egypt to Gaza. But the Philistines were, unquestionably, the most powerful and warlike people then in Palestine, and there was already some ill-blood between them and the Israelites *, and would be likely to offer a most formidable opposition to them at the very first step of their progress. The Hebrews were in fact altogether unfit to face such enemies, or any enemies whatever: they were not yet even fit to be a nation; and therefore, instead of being at once led to their promised heritage, it was the Divine will that they should be conducted into the Desert, there to be trained, disciplined, and instructed, so as to fit them for their future destinies. Moses knew that their first destination was the wilderness of Sinai; for when the Lord appeared to him in Horeb, it was announced that the bondaged children of Abraham should be brought to worship God in that very mountain.

The Hebrews left Rameses and proceeded on their way. And now it appeared that the Lord provided against their going astray, by placing a miraculous column of cloud to go before them by day and mark out their road; while by night it became a column of fire and gave light to all the camp. This was important, also, as evincing that Moses was not acting by his own authority, and that however highly he was entitled to their confidence and respect, they had a more unerring Guide and a more exalted Protector.

Their first day's journey brought them to Succoth. We relinquish the notion which we once entertained that Succoth may have been at or near the place (Birket el Hadj or Pilgrim's Pool) where the great pilgrim caravan encamps and makes its final arrangements for its journey. We think it, upon the whole, more likely that the point from which the Hebrews departed *in the first instance* may have been in that neighbourhood. Succoth, therefore, must be sought somewhere about a day's journey in the direction towards Suez. The name denotes *tents* or *booths*, and it is useless to seek its site, as the name appears only to denote a place where caravans passing that way usually encamped.

Their next resting-place of which we are told was "Etham, in the edge of the wilderness." But in this, as in other cases, we are not to suppose that the places which are named are the only places at which they rested; and in the present instance the distance may suggest that this Etham was the third rather than the second encampment. The halting-places of caravans are in these desert regions so much determined by the presence of wells, that in connection with the circumstance of its being situated "in the edge of the wilderness," there is not much difficulty in concluding that Etham is represented by the modern Adjeroud, which forms the third stage of the pilgrim's caravan, and where there is an old fortress, a small village, and copious well of indifferent water. This place is about eleven miles to the north-west of Suez. The neighbourhood seems indeed to be on the edge of the wilderness: for what M. du Bois-Aymé says of Bir-Suez (which *he* identifies with Etham) is true also of Adjeroud, that, in effect, it appears to be towards the extremity of the desert: for from hence the sea is seen to make a bend to the west, and by joining the high chain of Mount Attaka to terminate the desert to the south. The journey to this point had been for the most part over a desert, the surface of which is composed of hard gravel, often strewed with pebbles.

They had now arrived near the head of the Red Sea, and also, as we suppose, at the limit of the three days' journey into the wilderness for which they had applied. It is, therefore, evident that their next move must decide their future course, and convey to the Egyptians a clear and decisive intimation of their intentions. If they designed to do as they had all along declared to be their only wish, they would stay at this place and proceed to celebrate the feast to JEHOVAH, of which so much had been said: but, if they intended to escape altogether, they would resume their journey, and, passing by the head of the Red Sea, strike off into the desert. And here God, who knew that the

* See page 101.

king of Egypt had so far recovered his consternation that he was determined to pursue and drive them back, if they made any move indicating an intention to escape, directed a move which must have been most unexpected to all parties, and which could not to any indifferent spectator have seemed the result of the most gross and fatal infatuation.

About the head of the Gulf of Suez a desert plain extends for ten or twelve miles to west and north of the city of that name. On the west this plain is bounded by the chain of Attaka, which comes down towards the sea in a north-easterly direction. Opposite Suez this chain is seen at a considerable distance, but, as we advance southward, the mountains rapidly approach the sea, and proportionately contract the breadth of the valley; and the chain terminates at the sea, and seems, in the distant view, to shut up the valley at Ras-el-Attaka, or Cape Attaka, twelve miles below Suez. But on approaching this point, ample room is found to pass beyond; and on passing beyond we find ourselves in a broad alluvial plain, forming the mouth of the valley of Bedea. This plain is on the other or southern side nearly shut up by the termination of another chain of these mountains, which extend between the Nile and the western shore of the Red Sea. Any further progress in this direction would be impossible to a large army, especially when encumbered with flocks and herds, and with women, children, and baggage; and this from the manner in which the rocks, the promontories, and the cliffs advance on the western shore. And, besides, any advance in this direction would be suicidal to a body desiring to escape from Egypt, as they would have the Red Sea between them and Arabia Proper, and could only get involved among the plains and valleys which separate the mountain-chains of Egyptian Arabia.

The valley of Bedea, which opens to the Red Sea in the broad plain to which we have brought the reader, narrows as it proceeds westward towards the Nile. It forms a fine roadway between the valley of the Nile and the Red Sea, and, as such, has in all ages been one of the most frequented routes in all the country, being traversed by all parties and caravans which desire to proceed from the neighbourhood of Cairo, or places to the south of Cairo, to Suez, or to places lying beyond the head of the gulf.

Now, the Hebrew host being at Etham, and their next step from thence being of the utmost importance, they were directed, not —as might obviously have been expected— to pass round the head of the gulf into the Sinai peninsula, but to proceed southward, between the mountains of Attaka and the *western* shore of the gulf, and, after passing the Ras-el-Attaka, to encamp in the plain into which the valley of Bedea opens. The more thoroughly any one makes himself acquainted with the topography of this region, the more obvious and reasonable, we are persuaded, will seem to him this explanation of the text—"Turn and encamp before Pi-ha-hiroth [the mouth of the ridge], between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea." As the names Migdol and Baalzephon are not now recognisable anywhere about the head of the gulf*, no facts or inferences can be deduced from them; but an important confirmation is derived from the circumstance that we are told that, in consequence of the move which was made, the Hebrew host were shut up between the sea and the mountains, without any means of escape, unless through the sea, when the retreat in the rear was cut off.

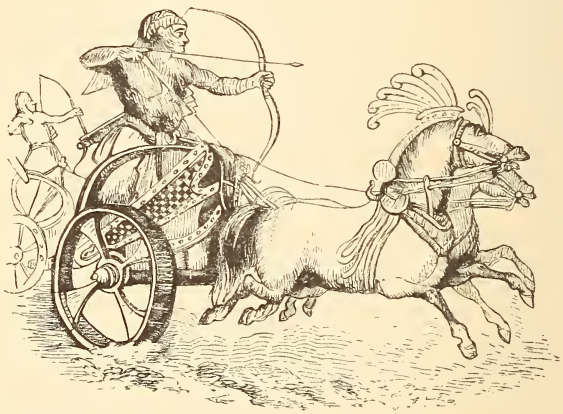
Many have thought they found cause to wonder at this extraordinary movement, which placed the Hebrews in a position of such inextricable difficulty, forgetting that this was the very purpose of God, that the prospect of an extraordinary advantage might tempt the Egyptians on to their own destruction, and bring them within the reach of those agencies by which God intended to act against them. The wonder which the reader may feel is exactly the wonder which the king of Egypt felt, and by which he was led on to his ruin.

* *Migdol* was probably *a tower*, as the name imports, and may seem to have been on the mountains which hem in the valley. *Baal-zephon*, meaning *the Northern Baal* or *Lord*, would seem to have been a town or temple situated somewhere in the plain of Medea, or over against it on the *eastern* shore of the sea.

The movement was made; and the thousands of Israel encamped in the plain of Bedea.

The days which had passed had given the Egyptians time to recover from some portion of their panic; and their first feeling, of unmixed horror and alarm, gave place to considerable resentment and regret, on the king's part, that he had so suddenly conceded all the points which had been contested between him and Moses, and had allowed them all to depart; and as for his subjects, such of them as had a profitable interest in the labours of the Israelites would, to some extent, join in the king's feelings, as soon as their bondsmen took any course to intimate that they intended to escape; and the same intimation would not fail to alarm those who had "lent" to the Hebrews their "jewels of silver and jewels of gold," and who by this time had found leisure to think that they had too easily parted with their wealth. Thus it seems that the course which the Israelites might take after their arrival at Etham was regarded with much anxiety by the Egyptians, who took care to be informed of all their movements.

When, therefore, the king heard not only that they had taken a decisive move from Etham, but, through some astonishing infatuation, had so moved as to become "entangled in the land," and that the "wilderness had shut them in," he hastened to avail himself of the extraordinary advantage which they had placed in his hands. "He made ready his chariot, and took his people with him." He mustered not less than six hundred chariots, which are said to be all the [war] chariots of Pharaoh. This is in correspondence with the sculptures, which show that the Egyptians made great use in war of such chariots as our cut exhibits. A large body



[Egyptian War Chariot.]

of infantry was also assembled, and the pursuit commenced. Their light, unencumbered march was, no doubt, much more quickly performed than that of the Israelites to the same place.

One of the citations in Eusebius from the lost history of Manetho, the Egyptian priest, says, "The Heliopolitans relate that the king, with a great army, *accompanied by the sacred animals*, pursued after the Jews, *who had carried off with them the substance of the Egyptians*."* This takes notice of two facts not mentioned by Moses, but not at all disagreeing with his statement, namely, that, for their protection against the God of Israel, the Egyptians took with them their sacred animals, by which means the Lord executed judgment upon the [bestial] gods of Egypt, as had been foretold (Exod. xii. 12); and

* 'Præp. Evang.' lib. x. cap. 27.

then that to recover the substance which the Hebrews had "borrowed" was one of the objects of the pursuit.

We do not agree with those who think that the king of Egypt came upon the encamped Hebrews through the valley of Bedea, in the plain at the mouth of which they were encamped. As he was so glad to find how they had "entangled themselves in the land," he was not likely to take a course which would deprive him of all the advantages derivable from their apparent oversight. This he would do by coming upon them through the valley of Bedea, for this would have left open to them the alternative of escaping from their position by the way they entered; whereas, by coming the same way they had come, he shut up that door of escape; and, if they fled before him, left them no other visible resource but to march up the valley of Bedea, back to Egypt, before the Egyptian troops. That this was really the advantage to himself which the king saw in their position, and that it was his object to drive them before him back to Egypt through this valley, or to destroy them if they offered to resist, we have not the least doubt: and it is unlikely that he would take any road but that which would enable him to secure these benefits.

The Egyptians, being satisfied that they had secured their prey, and that it was impossible for their fugitive bondsmen to escape but by returning to Egypt, were in no haste to assail them. They were also, themselves, probably, wearied by their rapid march. They therefore encamped for the night—for it was towards evening when they arrived—intending, probably, to give effect to their intentions in the morning.

As for the Israelites, the sight of their old oppressors struck them with terror. There was no faith or spirit in them. They knew not how to value their newly-found liberty. They deplored the rash adventure in which they had engaged; and their servile minds looked back with regret and envy upon the enslaved condition which they had so lately deplored. Moses knew them well enough not to be surprised that they assailed him as the author of all the calamities to which they were now exposed. Is it "because there were no graves in Egypt," said they, "thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." This is one specimen of a mode of feeling and character among this spiritless and perverse people of which Moses had seen something already, and of which he had soon occasion to see much more. One might be disposed to judge of their feelings the more leniently, attributing them to the essential operation of personal slavery in enslaving the mind, by debasing its higher tones of feeling and character, did we not know that the same characteristics of mind and temper constantly broke out among this remarkable people very long after the generation which knew the slavery of Egypt had passed away.

Moses did not deign to remonstrate with them or to vindicate himself. It seems that the Divine intention had been previously intimated to him; for he answered, with that usual emphasis of expression which makes it a pleasure to transcribe his words—"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." They were pacified by this for the present; but there is good reason to suspect that, if measures of relief had long been delayed, they would have given up Moses and Aaron to the Egyptians, and have placed themselves at their disposal. But measures of relief were *not* long delayed. When the night was fully come, the Lord directed Moses to order the people to march forward to the sea; on their arriving at which the prophet lifted up his rod upon the waters, over which instantly blew a powerful east wind, by which they were divided from shore to shore, so that the firm bottom of hard sand appeared: offering a dry road in the midst of the sea, by which they might pass to the eastern shore. At that instant also the pillar of fire which had gone before

the Hebrews to guide them on their way was removed to their rear, and, being thus between them and the Egyptians, it gave light to the former in their passage, while it concealed their proceedings and persons from the latter.

It thus happened that some time passed before the Egyptians discovered that the Israelites were in motion. When they made this discovery, the king determined to follow. It is by no means clear that they knew or thought that they were following them into the bed of the sea. Considering the darkness of the night, except from the light of the pillar, with the confusion of ideas and indistinct perceptions of a people who had not been on the spot long enough to make particular observations, and most of them probably roused from sleep to join in the pursuit, it seems likely that they felt uncertain about the direction, and supposed that they were following some accustomed route by which the Israelites were either endeavouring to escape or to return to Egypt. They may even have thought they were going up the valley of Bedea, although that actually lay in an opposite direction. Anything, however improbable, seems more likely to have occurred to them than that they were passing through the divided sea.

By the time the day broke and the Egyptians became aware of their condition, all the Hebrews had safely reached the other side, and all or nearly all the Egyptians were in the bed of the gulf; the van approaching the eastern shore, and the rear having left the western. The moment of vengeance was come. They found themselves in the midst of the sea, with the waters on their right hand and on their left, and only restrained from overwhelming them by some power they knew not, but which they must have suspected to have been that of the God of the Hebrews. The marine road, ploughed by the multitudes which went before them, became distressing to them; their chariot-wheels dragged heavily along, and very many of them came off from the cars which they supported. The Lord also began to trouble them with a furious warfare of the elements. The Psalmist more than once alludes to this. He exclaims, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid:" and then speaks as if every element had spent its fury upon the devoted heads of the Egyptians. The earth shook; the thunders rolled; and most appalling lightnings—the arrows of God—shot along the firmament; while the clouds poured down heavy rains, "hailstones, and coals of fire."* It deserves to be mentioned that this strife is also recorded by the Egyptian chronologer, who reports, "It is said that fire flashed against them in front."

By this time the pursuers were thoroughly alarmed. "Let us flee," said they, "from the face of Israel; for JEHOVAH fighteth for them against the Egyptians." But at that instant the Lord gave the word, Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the restrained waters returned and engulfed them all.

This stupendous event made a profound impression upon the Hebrew mind at large. From that day to the end of the Hebrew polity, it supplied a subject to which the sacred poets and prophets make constant allusions in language the most sublime. Its effect upon the generation more immediately concerned was very strong, and, although they were but too prone to forget it, was more abiding and operative than any which had yet been made upon them. When they witnessed all these things, and soon after saw the carcases of those who had so lately been the objects of such intense dread to them, lying by thousands on the beach—"They feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses."

In the sublime song which Moses composed and sang with the sons of Israel in commemoration of this great event—their marvellous deliverance and the overthrow of their enemies—he, with his usual wisdom, looks forward to important ulterior effects, to secure to the Hebrews the benefit of which may not improbably have formed one of the principal reasons for this remarkable exhibition of the power of Jehovah, and of his determination to protect the chosen race. These anticipations, which were abundantly

* Psalm xviii. 13–15; lxxvii. 16, 17.

fulfilled, are contained in the following verses:—

"The nations shall hear this and tremble;
Anguish shall seize the inhabitants of Palestine.
Then shall the princes of Edom be amazed;
And dismay shall possess the mighty ones of Moab.
All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away;
Fear and terror shall fall upon them:
Through the greatness of thine arm
They shall become still as a stone*,
Until thy people pass over [Jordan], O JEHOVAH,
Until thy people pass over whom thou hast redeemed."†

On this occasion the first instance is offered of a custom, learnt most probably in Egypt, and ever retained by the Hebrew women, of celebrating with dances and timbrels every remarkable event of joy or triumph. They were now led by Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron; and they seem to have taken part as a chorus in the song of the men, by answering:—

"Let us sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously,
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

It will appear, from the opinion we have been induced to entertain respecting the place in which the Israelites encamped, and from which they departed, on the western shore of the gulf, that we concur with those who regard Ain Mousa‡ as the place, on the eastern shore, where they came up from the bed of the sea, and where they witnessed the overthrow of their oppressors. We shall not here add anything to the consideration by which we have in another place§ endeavoured to support this conclusion. That the site is thus distinguished in the local traditions of the inhabitants of Sinai, the name alone suffices to indicate; and, although undue weight should not be attached to such traditions, it would be wrong entirely to disregard them when they support or illustrate conclusions otherwise probable. We shall, however, content ourselves with adding, descriptively, that a number of green shrubs, springing from numerous hillocks, mark the landward approach to this place. Here are also a number of neglected palm-trees grown thick and bushy for want of pruning. The springs which here rise out of the ground in various places, and give name to the spot, are soon lost in the sands. The water is of a brackish quality, in consequence, probably, of the springs being so near the sea; but it is, nevertheless, cool and refreshing, and in these waterless deserts affords a desirable resting-place. The view from this place, looking westward, is very beautiful, and most interesting from its association with the wonderful events which it has been our duty to relate. The mountain chains of Attaka, each running into a long promontory, stretch along the shore of Africa; and nearly opposite our station we view the opening—the Pi-ha-biroth—the "mouth of the ridge," formed by the valley in the mouth of which the Hebrews were encamped before they crossed the sea. On the side where we stand, the access to the shore from the bed of the gulf would have been easy. And it deserves to be mentioned, that not only do the springs bear the name of Moses, but the projecting head-land below them, towards the sea, bears the name of Ras Mousa. Thus do the Cape of Moses and the Cape of Deliverance look towards each other from the opposite shores of the Arabian Gulf, and unite their abiding and unshaken testimony to the judgments and wonders of that day in which the right hand of Jehovah was so abundantly "glorified in might."

* That is, "Shall be petrified."
† Exod. xv. 14—16.
‡ The Fountains of Moses.
§ 'Pictorial Bible,' note on Exod. xiv. 2.

CHAPTER IV.

SINAI.

The Israelites, now relieved from all fear of the Egyptians, probably made some considerable stay at Ain Mousa. The district was then regarded as "the wilderness of Shur," a name of wide extent, a clear trace of which is still exhibited in the present name of Sdur.

When they departed, their road lay over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony, alternately. On their right hand their eyes rested on the deep blue waters of the gulf so lately sundered for their sake; while on their left hand the mountain-chain of El Ruhat, stretching away to a greater distance from the shore as the pilgrims advanced. In about nine miles they entered a boundless desert plain, called El Ati, white and painfully glaring to the eye. Proceeding beyond this, the ground became hilly, with sand-hills near the coast. In all this way, which it took them three days to traverse, they found no water; but then at last they came to a well, the waters of which were so bitter, that it bore the name of Marah [*Bitterness*]. That name, in the form of *Amarah*, is now borne by the barren bed of a winter torrent a little beyond which is still found a well, bearing the name of Howara, whose bitter waters answer to this description. Camels will drink it; but even the thirsty Arabs never drink of it themselves; and it is the only water on the shore of the Red Sea which they cannot drink. This, when first taken into the mouth, seems insipid rather than bitter; but when held in the mouth a few seconds it becomes extremely nauseous. This well rises within an elevated mound surrounded by sand-hills, and two small date-trees grow near it*.

The Hebrews, unaccustomed as yet to the hardships of the desert, and having been in the habit of drinking their fill of the best water in the world, were much distressed by the scarcity of water in the region in which they now wandered, and they were disappointed of the relief they expected from this well; they murmured greatly against Moses for having brought them into such a dry wilderness, and asked him, "What shall we drink?" On this Moses cried to Jehovah, who indicated to him an unknown tree, on throwing the branches of which into the well, the waters became sweet and fit for use.

Departing thence, they soon found the country become more mountainous and picturesque; and when they arrived at Elim, the cheerful presence of twelve wells of water and seventy palm-trees engaged them to encamp. This spot is, with sufficient probability, supposed to be the same as that which now bears the name of Wady Gharendel, which is the largest of all the torrent beds on the western side of the peninsula. It is about a mile broad, and extends away indefinitely to the north-east. This pleasant valley abounds in date-trees, tamarisks, acacia, and the shrub *ghurkud*†; but the springs are too distant from the common route to be visited by travellers.

Soon after the Hebrew host left Elim, they entered the "wilderness of Sinai, which is between Elim and Sinai," which we interpret to signify the rocky desert—yet not without pleasant valleys here and there—which extends from below Wady Gharendel to the borders of the Upper Sinai, or, more precisely, to the neighbourhood of Wady Feiran and Mount Serbal‡. By this time a month had passed since they left Egypt, and the provisions on which they had hitherto subsisted began to run short. On this, as usual, they murmured against their leaders, in such a style, that we can scarcely help regarding them as being, at that time, a body of the most gross and gluttonous slaves with which

* Lord Lindsay's 'Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land,' ii. 263.

† *Peganum retusum.*—Forskal.

‡ Wady Mokatteb is one of the valleys of this district, and through it the most common route lies.

history makes us acquainted. "Would to God," cried they, "we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Exod. xvi. 3.

It may seem strange that a people who possessed flocks and herds in abundance should utter such a complaint. But it is true that there are, at this day, few people who eat less animal food than the pastoral tribes of Western Asia; and to them the slaughter of a productive animal seems an act of extravagance almost culpable, unless performed to furnish an entertainment for friends or strangers. The animal food which the Israelites had eaten in Egypt was derived from the Egyptians, not from their own flocks and herds: merely as a pastoral people they would not have felt the want of flesh-meat; but, having now been accustomed to it in the service of the Egyptians, they felt an inclination for it,—but not at the expense of their own flocks and herds. In short, it may be well to understand that meat is upon the whole regarded as a luxury, rather than as a usual article of food, among the pastoral tribes, and even, although in a less degree, among the settled communities of Western Asia. The want of corn formed a fairer subject of complaint; for some kind of grain is necessary even to a Bedouin, and must have seemed particularly necessary to those who had all their lives eaten bread to the full in the country where corn was the most abundantly produced.

The reply to their complaint was, that they should that very evening have meat to eat, and in the morning bread to the full. But they were reminded that the miraculous gratification of their wants by the power of JEHOVAH might also evince that He had heard their murmurings, which, although immediately levelled at Moses and Aaron, were in reality murmurings against him, and implied distrust of his power and his care. To confirm this, they were directed to look towards the wilderness, where they beheld the effulgence or glory by which he *manifested* his presence, beaming forth from the cloud which went before them and rested with them. It proved, however, that the meat—the luxury — and which they had other means of obtaining—was supplied only this time and once again the next year; whereas bread, or rather a substitute for it, which they could not otherwise have obtained, was supplied to them constantly from that time forward.

Poultry and feathered game have in all ages been favourite articles of food in Egypt. The Egyptians were expert fowlers, and had the art of salting for future use some of those birds of passage which are plentiful at one time of the year, and not at all seen in the other part. Among these birds quails were not the least esteemed. They are plentiful in Egypt from about the middle of autumn to the beginning of summer, when, that and the adjoining countries becoming too hot for them, while the more northern countries have ceased to be too cold, they take wing, and proceed to the north, or north-west, or east, their immediate course being much determined by the direction of the wind, which at the time of their flight in the late spring blows generally from the south.

Now God, at the time fixed by himself, supplied the Hebrews with food—the food they desired—through such a flight of quails. He gave the wind which directed the course of an enormous flight of these birds over the camp of the Israelites, where, wearied with their flight across the Red Sea, they flew so heavily and low, that it was easy for the people to capture immense numbers of them. Thus were they, for the time, abundantly supplied with the sort of food they had been taught to value in Egypt; and the arrival, exactly at their camp, of this immense flock of quails, might have sufficed to convince even their obduracy that they were indeed the special objects of care to an Almighty protector and guide.

But this was not all; for the next morning there was a fall of dew around the camp; and, when the dew had dried up, the ground was found to be covered with a small and shining substance, small as the particles of hoar-frost, and in shape like coriander-seed. The Hebrews, who had never before beheld

such a substance, asked one another, "What is it?" [MAN-HU?] from which question it took the name of MANNA. Moses answered their question by telling them that this was the provision of bread which the Lord had promised, and of which every man was directed to take the quantity of a homer* for each member of his family. They did so. Some gathered more and some less; but, as the whole was afterwards measured out at the rate of a homer to each person, "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." They were then fully instructed in the nature and use of this marvellous food. They were told, indeed they saw, that all which remained ungathered dissolved in the heat of the sun and was lost. They were also informed that the quantity collected was only intended for the food of the current day, and that if any of it were kept till the next morning it would corrupt and breed worms. Notwithstanding this, some of the people did, out of curiosity or precaution, save some of it, which in the morning was found to be in a condition so stinking and full of worms as to be entirely unfit for use. And yet it was directed that a double quantity should be gathered on the sixth day; for the seventh day was henceforth to be observed by the Israelites as a day of rest from all labour, and on that day no fresh manna would be supplied. That day they were to live on the surplus quantity which they collected the day before; and it proved that the quantity thus kept for the sabbath remained sweet and wholesome, notwithstanding that it corrupted if kept more than one day under ordinary circumstances. In preparing this matter for use, they found that they could deal with it much as with grain. They ground it in their hand-mills, or pounded it in mortars, kneaded it into dough, and baked it *in* one kind of pan-oven, or *upon* one of another kind, according to the processes of preparing bread, which were used in Ancient Egypt, and are still preserved in the East. It was thus made into cakes, which is the form usually given to Oriental bread; and these cakes were found to taste like the finest bread made with honey, or, as described in another place, with oil†.

Such was the substance, and thus was it supplied, which formed "the staff of life" to the vast Hebrew host through all their long stay in the wilderness.

From the station in the wilderness of Sin which these transactions made so memorable, the Israelites continued their journey over a sandy and stony region, intersected by the beds of numerous torrents, which are perfectly dry, except in the season of rain, when some of them are of very considerable depth. Except at that season water is scarce; and by the usual and nearest route, which is generally supposed to be that which was taken by the Israelites, occurs only at two places before reaching Wady Feiran. These places we incline to think were the stations Dophkah and Alush, at which we are told the host rested between the Desert of Sin and Rephidim‡. The first of these is at Wady Naszeb, where the neighbourhood of a well of good water, combined with the shelter of a large impending rock, makes the most favourite resting-place which this wild region offers. The other may have been at Wady Boodra, where there is a spring of good water, which, being somewhat aside from the common road and often choked with sand, has escaped the notice of most travellers.

The next rest of the Israelites was at Rephidim, where no water could be found. The determination of this station and of the two preceding is connected with an inquiry concerning the true situation of Mount Sinai, from which they received the law, and before which they remained so long encamped; for Rephidim was the last resting-place before reaching the base of that mountain.

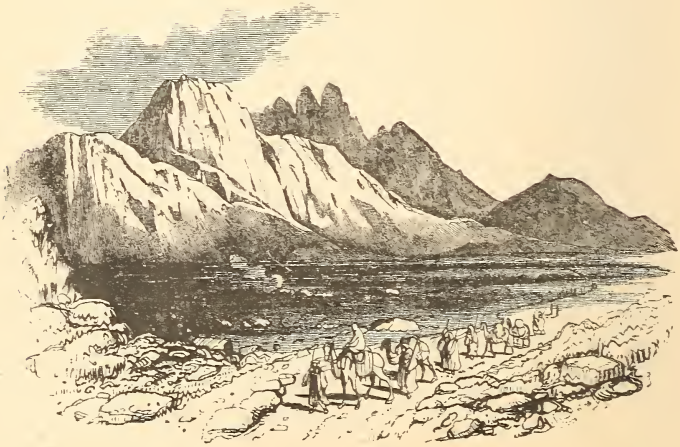
The more diligently we compare the accounts of Scripture with the statements of travellers, the more entirely we are convinced that the mountains now pointed out as Horeb and Sinai could not possibly be the scene of the transactions which the Hebrew

* About five and one-tenth pints.

† Compare the accounts of this manna given in Exod. xvi. 14. 23, and Num. xi. 7—9.

‡ Num. xxxiii. 12, 13. The list of names in this chapter contains many stations omitted in Exodus.

MOUNT TABOR.



MOUNT AND PLAIN OF SINAI.

history records. How these high interior mountains, surrounded by narrow ravines and valleys, in which it is impossible that the host of Israel could have remained encamped with the room and comfort which they manifestly enjoyed, is not a question which requires consideration in this place. But it is probable that, when attention began to be strongly directed towards Sinai, during the first fervour of the spirit for pilgrimages, and when it was determined to build a convent in this place, the present spot was deemed the most eligible for the establishment, and that therefore the monks successfully endeavoured to direct attention to it as the sacred locality. In this they were no doubt powerfully aided by the discovery of the pretended remains of St. Catherine upon the summit of the mountain which has since borne her name. It is to her honour that the convent is dedicated. However this be, more than one of our more inquiring travellers have been struck by the unsuitableness of the alleged Sinai to be the scene of the circumstances we shall presently relate. In this belief we have sought for a mountain in this region which might be open to none of the objections to which the other is liable. We think that we have found this in the Mount Serbal.

The grandeur of this mountain is not exceeded by that of any other in Sinai; indeed, its grandeur is, in appearance, the greatest, seeing that it raises its equal height from lower ground, in more distinctness and fulness of separate form, and in majesty more single and apart, while around it, instead of narrow ravines, it overlooks broad and rich valleys and ample plains, in which even so immense a host as that of Israel might remain conveniently encamped with all their flocks and herds. And besides this, such are the manifest tokens in the caves which have been formed, and in the inscriptions with which its sides are charged, that Mount Serbal was in ancient times regarded as a holy mountain; that even Burckhardt allows that this was probably considered the "Mount of God," *before* that distinction was applied to the mountain which now bears it, and which *he* thinks is justly entitled to it. We recommend the subject to the more particular inquiries of those who feel any interest in it; and, meanwhile, we shall probably be thought entitled to assume the probability we have wished to establish.

But if Mount Serbal was the Sinai, then the station Rephidim, where the host of Israel thirsted before they came to Sinai, must also have been before Mount Serbal; and then, reflectively, if Rephidim was before Mount Serbal, the greater is the probability that Mount Serbal is Sinai. But Rephidim was certainly not at the place where it is now fixed, which is in about the most impossible situation that can be conceived, and where no one in his senses would have dreamed of looking for it, unless the monks of St. Catherine's convent had found it convenient so near at hand. It is high up the central cluster of mountains in the ravine or very narrow valley, El Erbayn, which separates the summits of St. Catherine and the so-called Sinai. As there is not one circumstance of probability or of congruity with the sacred narrative in this position, we shall waste no words to disprove it, but content ourselves with intimating that there is no part of this central region in which a miracle to produce water would not have been grossly superfluous, so abundant are the natural springs. Seeing, therefore, that Rephidim could not be here, that no man need feel thirst after he has entered or passed the beautiful and well-watered valley of Feiran*, *which extends before and leads to Mount Serbal*, we have concluded that Rephidim must have been at some point before that valley was reached.

In this place the people, unmindful, in the agonies of their thirst, of the experienced mercies of God, began to murmur so loudly against Moses and Aaron, that unless immediate relief were afforded it seemed likely that they would be stoned by the now fierce multitude. Moses cried to God, who told him to take the elders of the people on with him as witnesses, and smite with his rod a

* Which name is undoubtedly the same as Paran, a name which Scripture applies to Mount Sinai. Now this valley, still bearing this name, extends in front of Serbal. Lord Lindsay has a fine description of this valley, i. 275—281.

rock in Horeb, from which streams of water should then miraculously flow to give drink to the people. This was done; and to commemorate the transaction Moses imposed on the place the names of Massa [*Temptation*] and Meribah [*Contention*]*.

We have not hitherto heard of the inhabitants of the Sinai peninsula, or understood how they were affected by the recent transactions, or with what feelings they regarded the advance of the vast Hebrew host into the finest part of the country. We now hear of them.

It appears that not only the peninsula, but the adjoining deserts towards the south of Palestine, were in the occupation of an extensive and powerful tribe, of Bedouin or semi-Bedouin habits, called Amalekites. The fine valley of Feiran was then, doubtless, as now, the principal seat of those who occupied the peninsula; and, indeed, the Arabian historians preserve the tradition that the valley contained ancient settlements and towns of the Amalekites. There are some ruins of an old city, which they say was *F*aran or *P*aran, and that it was founded by, and belonged to, the Amalekites; and they affirm that the numerous excavations in the mountains near, were the sepulchres of that people†.

These Amalekites determined to resist the further progress of the Israelites, who had now, as we have supposed, reached the very borders of their chief settlements in Wady Feiran. Their knowledge of the wealth with which the Hebrews were at this time laden —the spoils of Egypt,—probably tended the more to excite and strengthen this resolve. That they should venture to assail such an immense body as that of the Hebrews may, at first, seem strange; but we are to consider that they probably looked upon them as a confused body of spiritless slaves—as, in fact, they were,—debilitated, morally at least, by their long bondage in Egypt; and they had doubtless military experience enough to know that the numbers of a host composed like this, and encumbered with women and children, flocks and herds, did not render them the more formidable.

When the hostile intentions of the Amalekites were discovered, Moses, well acquainted with the courage and discretion of his personal follower, JOSHUA, whose name now occurs for the first time, resolved to confide to him the conduct of this first military action. He was directed to form a chosen body from the whole host, and with them give battle to the Amalekites the next morning. When that morning broke, Joshua advanced against the enemy, while Moses ascended a hill with Aaron and Hur, that he might view the battle, and pray to the Lord for success in this first essay of arms. He lifted his hands in prayer as the armies met, and Amalek was unable to withstand the force of the Hebrew onset. Moses ceased his prayer, and Amalek prevailed; but when the prophet again lifted up his faithful and clean hands, Joshua was again the stronger. Seeing this, he determined to continue in prayer; but, when weariness overcame him, Aaron and Hur brought him a stone on which he sat, while they sustained his uplifted arms until the setting of the sun, by which time the Amalekites were completely routed. It was thus that God convinced the Hebrews that the glory of this victory was due to Him, and not themselves—to his favour, and not their strength.

Bitter was the doom pronounced from Heaven upon the Amalekites, for this first act of hostility against the chosen people, in their most weak and unorganised condition. And to understand it clearly, we should recollect that this act was one of defiance against the Power by which they were protected: for the Amalekites had seen before their very eyes the wonders which the Lord had wrought for this people in the Red Sea and in the desert; and the aggression was, therefore, in every way stronger than that of any people with whom, in after days, the Hebrews were engaged in warfare. They lifted up their swords against the Israelites, in the very presence, as it were, of that mighty Protector, the mere report of whose deeds struck terror into the hearts of na-

* "Because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?"—Exod. xvii. 7.

† Makrizi in Burckhardt, p. 617.

tions, later in time and remoter in place, who had only heard of those things by "the hearing of the ear." For this their doom was abiding enmity and ultimate extirpation; and very noticeable are the terms in which it is expressed—showing the superior importance which was now attached to written testimonials: "*Write this for a memorial in a book*, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." To impress it upon the people that their deliverance was due to God, Moses erected an altar, at which their thanks might be publicly acknowledged, and the memory of their deliverance perpetuated: and the name which he imposed upon it, JEHOVAH-NISSI [JEHOVAH IS MY BANNER], made it a memorial of their obligation to extirpate Amalek.

This victory enabled the Hebrew host to advance, and encamp in peace in the wilderness at the foot of "the great mountain," which they did on the first day of the third month from their leaving Egypt.

This was the point of their immediate destination: in this place they were to behold the glory of their God, veiled in clouds,—to hear His voice amid the thunder,—to see His glances in the lightning,—and to feel the power of his right arm when it shook the mountains.

No sooner had they arrived at this place than the operation for which they were brought there, of forming them into a peculiar nation, commenced. The first measure was to obtain from the Israelites a distinct and formal recognition of the supreme authority of Jehovah, and the promise of implicit obedience to it. Moses, who had gone up into the mountain, returned to the Israelites, with instructions to say to them, in the name of God, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."* As they were unacquainted with any other priests than those of Egypt, the words in the last sentence probably conveyed to them the impression that from among the nations of the earth it was proposed to set them apart to his peculiar service and honour, in like manner as the hierarchy of Egypt was set apart as a distinct and honoured caste from among the Egyptian people.

* Exod. xix. 4—6.

The cheerful and ready answer of the people to Moses, "All that JEHOVAH hath spoken we will do," was gladly reported by him to the Lord, who then answered that on the third following day He would appear in glory upon the mountain, in the sight of all the people, to deliver in person the laws to which he required obedience. Against that time the people were to purify themselves, and wash their clothes, that they might appear worthily before their King. Moses bore this intelligence to the people, and it was arranged that they should on that day come forth from the camp, and stand, in an orderly manner, around the base of the mountain; and barriers were set up lest any rash persons should break through to look upon JEHOVAH, and so perish.

The eventful day arrived, being the fifth day of that month, and the fiftieth after the departure from Egypt. The morning was ushered in with terrible thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud rested upon the mountain-top. There was heard a sound like that of a trumpet, but so exceedingly loud that the people trembled greatly. They were then drawn out, and stood around the mountain, "to meet with God." They found the mountain wholly enveloped in fire, and smoke, and thick darkness; for God had descended in fire upon the mountain, which quaked beneath his feet. No figure or similitude appeared, but a VOICE was heard from amidst the thick clouds, giving utterance to the words which form the Decalogue. So awful and tremendous was the scene, that all the people, and even Moses himself, feared exceedingly and trembled—the more especially when they heard that Voice which they had not deemed that mortal man could hear and still live. They drew back from the mountain, and entreated Moses that they

might no more hear what they had heard, or see such things as they had seen; and desired that he would himself draw nigh, and hear what else JEHOVAH, their God, might say, and report it to them, and they would be obedient,—"But let not God speak with us, lest we die." They then retired still farther from the mountain, and Moses advanced to the thick darkness where God was. Then the Lord said to him, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. *O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* For I will raise them up a Prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him: and it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."* After he had heard these tender expressions, which so strongly exhibit God in his paternal character, and this promise, which is replete with significance to those who believe that Jesus Christ is the "Prophet" therein foretold, Moses returned to the people to dismiss them to their tents; after which, as required, he returned to the mountain, to receive from the Lord the fundamental laws and institutions by which the chosen people were in future to be governed.

On this first occasion Moses received a number of civil laws; and as they referred chiefly to the settled life which the Israelites as yet had only in prospect, the promise of the heritage in Canaan was renewed, with the intimation that no sudden expulsion of the present inhabitants of that land was within the Divine intention; but that they would be expelled by degrees, in proportion as the increasing population of the Hebrews might enable them to occupy the lands vacated by the Canaanites.

Moses returned to the camp to make this communication to the people. They promised obedience to the laws, which he then communicated to them. Then Moses *wrote down* all the words which the Lord had spoken; and, the next morning early, proceeded to build an altar at the foot of the mountain, and to set up twelve stones, corresponding to the number of the tribes. After sacrifices had been offered upon the altar, Moses took the book in which he had written down laws and promises which had already been received, and read them aloud to the people; and when they had again declared their formal assent to the terms of this covenant, he took the blood of the sacrifices, and sprinkled it over them, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words."

After this, Moses, as he had been directed, ascended again into the mountain, attended by Joshua, and accompanied by Aaron, Nadab and Abihu (two of his sons), and seventy of the elders of Israel. They entered not into the thick cloud; but, although they paused far below it, they were allowed to obtain a glimpse of that glory of the God of Israel which the cloud concealed. That which they beheld was but—speaking after the manner of men—the place of His feet, but it appeared "as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."

They ate together, there upon the mountain, on the meat of the peace-offerings which they had lately sacrificed, and on which the people were feasting in the plain below.

Moses was then called up into the clouded summit of the mountain. Before he went he desired those who had come with him to remain there until his return, and then proceeded, with Joshua, into the cloud. To the people in the plain, the higher part of the mountain seems at this time to have exhibited the appearance of being invested by a thick and dark cloud, while from the very top arose a large body of "devouring fire."† For six days Moses and Joshua remained under the cloud; but on the seventh day Moses was called to the very top, to which he went, leaving Joshua, probably, below. He there received instructions for the establishment of a priesthood, and the construc-

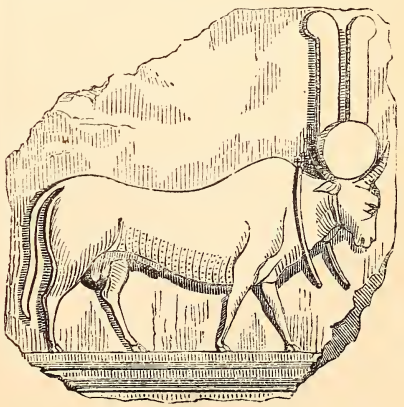
* Deut. v. and xviii.

† That is, fire in action, flaming, raging.

tion of a tabernacle, with laws concerning the Sabbath, and some other matters; and, in the end, he received two tablets of stone, on which God had written the words of those ten principal laws which he had previously proclaimed in the hearing of all the people.

Moses remained in the mountain forty days, during which he was divinely sustained, so as to feel no need of food. This long stay was probably unexpected by himself, and certainly was so by the friends he had left below, who, after some stay, how long we know not, grew tired of waiting longer, and returned to the camp. As the time passed, and nothing further was heard of Moses, the people became anxious and alarmed, and at last concluded that he had perished in that "devouring fire" that shone upon the mountain-top. Having, as they deemed, lost the leader, in whom they appear to have had as much confidence as they were capable of giving, they seem to have conceived that they were at liberty to construct their religious and civil system according to their own fancies; or, perhaps, surrounded, as their course was, by difficulties which they had not energy to meet, they contemplated a return to Egypt, calculating, perhaps, that a voluntary return, together with the death of their deliverer, would procure them a favourable reception in that country. The first act which occurred to them would have seemed a very suitable preparation for such a movement; at any rate, it exhibited strongly the Egyptian tendencies of their minds—the effects of that influence which, whether for good or (as in this instance) for evil, a civilised and accomplished people must always exercise upon any less accomplished and civilised people with whom they are, or have been, in contact. To appreciate this influence properly, in the case of the Hebrews, is to obtain the key to much which might otherwise seem obscure in the early *national* history of that people.

The Israelites had but lately heard God, from amid the lightnings, forbid that any image should be made for worship; and although that Voice, which "shook the heavens," had filled their souls with dread, and might still seem to ring in their ears, they now applied tumultuously to Aaron, saying, "Up, make us *a god* to go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Perhaps these expressions were not intended to be disrespectful to Moses, though from the difference of the Hebrew idiom they may seem so to us. At all events, in applying to Aaron (*who had not yet, that they knew, been appointed to the priesthood*) they recognised the authority which Moses had delegated, during his own absence, to him and to Hur. It is not by any means to be understood that the demand which they made, conveyed a rejection of JEHOVAH, the God of their fathers, whose wonders they had so lately witnessed, and by whose bounty they were still fed from day to day. It appears very evident from all that passed, that what they wanted was a symbolical representation of him, after the Egyptian fashion—a consecrated image to which they might render worship. Their minds were too gross to take in the idea of God apart from an image which might seem to embody and concentrate his presence. Even the sensible manifestations of his presence which JEHOVAH had afforded, and which was indeed still before their eyes, was not sufficient for them. They must have a representative image; but this God had strictly forbidden, knowing how easily the toleration of any image might lead them into the worship of other gods. All this was well known to Aaron: yet, wanting the moral courage of his brother, and fearing, perhaps,



[Apis.—The Golden Calf.]

that a refusal from him might lead them to transfer to another that authority which they were at present disposed to recognise in him, he had the culpable weakness to comply with their desires. But he required that they should contribute the ear-pendants of the women and children, possibly calculating that the reluctance of the women to part with these ornaments might occasion delay or difficulty; but, if so, he was mistaken. The ear-pendants were promptly collected, and given to him. He gave them to the founders (Egyptians, probably), who very quickly transformed them into a golden image, bearing the familiar figure of a calf —or rather a young bull,—no doubt in imitation of the Egyptian Apis, without the example of which this was not the representative symbol of the Deity which they were the most likely to have found. In setting up this idol, Aaron was careful to keep it in the minds of the people that it was but a symbolical figure of the true God. He recognised it with the words, "This is thy God, O Israel! that brought thee out of the land of Egypt," and proceeded to proclaim a feast to JEHOVAH for the next day. On that day a large majority of the people concurred in offering burnt-offerings * and peace-offerings † before the "golden calf," upon the altar which Aaron had caused to be made; and after the unhallowed sacrifice, they rose up for singing and dancing, and wanton play, according to the practice of the Egyptians in some of the services of Apis, or rather of Osiris, whom the bull Apis represented.

At that very time Moses, still in the mount, was commanded to descend to the people, in language which made their sin and the Divine indignation known to him. He hastened down, and in his descent was joined by the faithful Joshua, who had waited patiently for him. As they went down together, the noise from the camp reached their ears; and Joshua, whose ideas were of a military character, supposed it the sound of war. But Moses answered, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

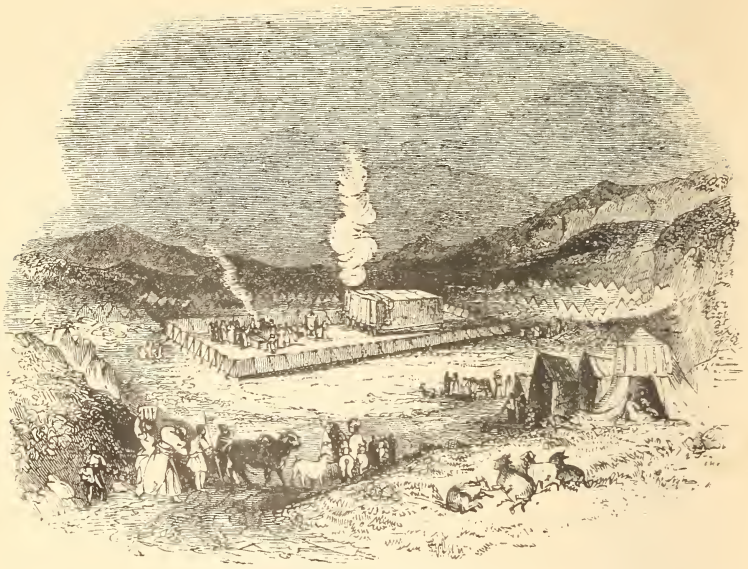
When they came near enough to notice the calf and the dancing before it, the anger of Moses was so excited, that he threw from his hands the tablets of stone which he had received from God, and brake them in pieces beneath the mountain, intending, probably, thereby to intimate that, in like manner, the recent covenant between God and them was broken on their part, and, in consequence, rescinded on His. Then he advanced to the golden calf, which they had made, "and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the Israelites drink of it,"—thus adding disgust to ignominy; for gold thus treated is of a most abominable taste.

After thus destroying the idol he proceeded to the punishment of the idolaters themselves. He stood at one of the entrances to the camp and cried, "Who is on JEHOVAH's side? Let him come unto me!" and in answer, all the men of his own tribe—that of Levi—gathered around him. These he ordered to go from one end of the camp to the other, sword in hand, and slay every one who persisted in his idolatry, without favour or affection either to their neighbour or their brother. They obeyed him; and 3000 men fell that day by their hands. Nor was this all; for the Lord sent plagues among the people, to punish them further for this great offence.

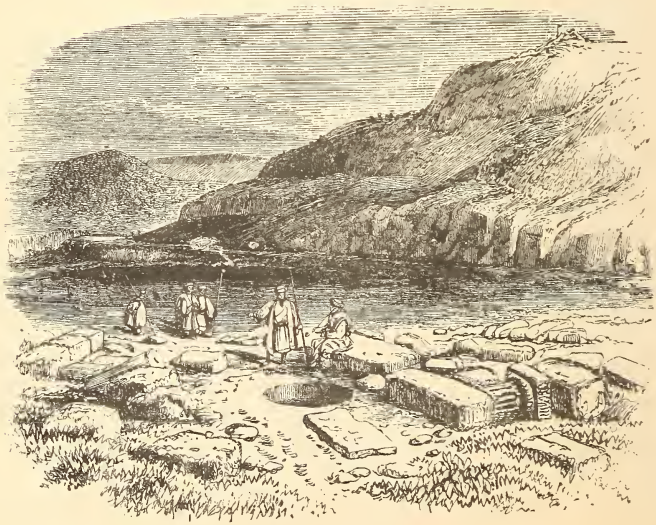
It was on this occasion that Moses was enabled to manifest his love for his people by his urgent intercessions with the Lord on their behalf; as well as the noble disinterestedness of his own character, by his refusal of the tempting offer from God to adopt his family in their room, and to "make of him a great nation." He prayed that the Almighty would "blot him out of his book," or take his life away, unless He would forgive "the great sin of his people." In the end he prevailed with God not only to receive them again into his favour, but to rescind the intention which had been intimated of withdrawing his own presence from them, and of sending an inferior angel to conduct them

* "*Burnt-offerings.*"—Offerings entirely consumed upon the altar.

† "*Peace-offerings.*"—Offerings in which certain parts only were consumed on the altar, the rest being eaten by the offerers.



THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.



JACOB'S WELL.

to the land of promise, and to drive out the Canaanites before them. It is but just to add that the intimation of this last purpose threw the Israelites into the utmost grief and consternation; and they remained, as mourners, without their ornaments, until it was recalled. During the same time also Moses removed his own tent out of their polluted camp; and only from time to time went thither to make known the commands of God.

When the Lord had pardoned his people and received them again into his favour, He commanded Moses to hew two tablets of stone, like those which he had broken, and to present them to him on the top of the mount. It was also promised to him that, according to his humble request, he should there obtain a fuller view of the glory of the Divine presence than he had hitherto enjoyed;—as full a view as mortal man could see and live, but infinitely short of the actual glories of His presence and His throne. Accordingly, as directed, he repaired to the mount with the tablets in his hands, and hid himself in a cleft of the rock. The Lord then descended upon the mountain in a cloud which hid the glory of his presence entirely from the people below, but which, as it passed by the place where Moses lay, enabled him to see as much of that glory as flesh and blood could bear: but what he did see, he, with proper and reverent reserve, abstains from describing; only we know that as the veiled glory passed by, a Voice was heard proclaiming, "JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH, a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth. *Keeping mercy to a thousand generations:* forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, *unto the third or fourth generation.*"

Moses again remained forty days in the mount, without meat or drink. At the end of that time he received back the tablets of stone, written over with the same words which the broken tablets had contained—the ten commandments; and this was probably intended as a token of the renewal of the covenant between God and the Hebrew people. Moses knew not that he had received a ray of that surpassing glory which had shone upon him, by virtue of which his countenance beamed with such heavenly light that Aaron and all the people, when he came down, were afraid to approach him. This light remained upon his countenance, and was so dazzling, that he found it convenient to cover his face with a veil in his general intercourse with the people, and appeared unveiled only when he drew near to God to receive His commands, and when he repeated those commands to the people, in whose eyes his authority and importance were, doubtless, much enhanced by this splendid peculiarity in his personal appearance.

During this stay of Moses in the mount, a visionary pattern of the tabernacle or portable temple, which he had formerly been directed to construct, was exhibited to him, and he was commanded to carry into effect the instructions he had received, all proceedings thereon having been prevented by the late unhappy circumstances.

The plan of the new establishment was highly acceptable to the Israelites, and they entered into it with great eagerness and zeal. It held out to them the prospect of a splendid temple, with costly utensils, and with a numerous priestly caste, the chief of them gorgeously arrayed, to present incense, and offerings, and sacrifices. A splendid ritual they had been accustomed to admire and (as we learn from various intimations) to imitate in Egypt; and this admiration and imitation had but lately led them into a very great sin. The new establishment must therefore be to some extent regarded as a concession to the notions of a people, who, like all others at that time, were incapable of understanding that purely spiritual worship which God himself would have counted of the most value. It is, indeed, easy to see that a people circumstanced as the Israelites were, and imbued as they were with Egyptian notions, might be the more easily kept in the right way through a splendid ritual directed to the proper object; while by a rigid interdiction of all these ceremonies

and acts, and apparatus of worship, which existed in other nations, such a people would stand exposed to very great danger of being corrupted or drawn aside from their own more severe and simple system. As a matter of mere human policy, therefore, it was, in the first instance, probable that such ritual institutions would be given to this people. But although we see that there was in these institutions much of concession to the ineradicable notions of the people for whom they were designed, they were so framed as to comprehend great ulterior objects, and to realize the largest amount of religious and political good which could possibly be derived from them.

No sooner were the Israelites made acquainted with the materials which would be required for the works of the tabernacle and its contents, and for the dresses and ornaments of the priests, than they poured in, with the most profuse liberality, whatever suitable articles they possessed: so that in a very short time Moses was obliged to have it proclaimed throughout the camp, that no more offerings were to be made for the sanctuary, as there was already enough, and more than enough for every purpose. The list of the articles contributed is very interesting, not only as showing the large quantity, but the nature and quality, of the wealth in their possession, and all of which they had probably brought from Egypt. These consisted chiefly of articles in brass, silver, and gold, intended to be melted down for the service required, together with precious stones, costly woods, rich stuffs, skins, oils, incense, and spices. The women were eminently distinguished on this occasion. They contributed their personal ornaments and trinkets; while their mirrors, of polished brass, were given up to form the brazen laver. Among all pastoral nations, the duty of forming into cloth the wool of the sheep, and the hair of the goat, devolves upon the women, and forms the principal occupation of their lives; and on the present occasion the women of Israel were busied in spinning, twisting, and weaving the clothes required for the hangings of the tabernacle.

When we consider that all the offerings were voluntary, with the exception of the small sum of half a shekel of silver, levied upon every male above twenty years of age, and yet find that the whole contribution *of gold and silver only* was worth about 185,000*l.* of our money, we shall have a strong idea, not only of the willing zeal of the Israelites, but of the splendour of the small fabric on which so much wealth was expended.

The practical director of all the work was an ingenious man of the tribe of Judah, Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur; and with him was Aholiah, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and designer, and embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in cotton*. It is so far satisfactory, that these curious, and for the age, interesting works were not executed under the direction of Egyptians, although it is not unlikely that the skill of such of that nation as were in the camp was made available in some of the practical operations; but there can be no question that Bezaleel and Aholiah had been instructed in Egypt in that knowledge which qualified them for the service they undertook. No one will, at the present day, contend that the Hebrews could know anything of the finer arts, but what they had learnt of the Egyptians during their sojourn and bondage in Egypt. And in this point of view the costly and ingenious works which were executed in the desert throw much light upon the state of the arts in that early age among the Egyptians, while they illustrate the extent of the obligations of the Israelites, in the finer arts of life, to that ingenious people. The information thus supplied is perfectly in agreement with that which the sculptured and painted remains of ancient Egypt now offer to us.

Such was the earnestness of all parties, that the tabernacle, with all its rich furniture, and costly apparatus, together with the splendid dress of the high priests, and the robes of the common priests, were all completed in less than six months. The tabernacle was erected, and all things connected with it disposed in proper order on the first day of the second year of the departure from Egypt. The Levites were then

* Exodus xxxv. 35.

set apart as a sacerdotal and learned caste, like the priestly caste in Egypt; and out of this caste the family of Aaron was solemnly consecrated to the higher offices of the priesthood—Aaron himself being appointed the high priest. When all was finished, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and the more public and outward sign of his presence, the pillar of cloud—that pillar which became a blaze of fire by night—rested upon it. The setting of the whole in order probably occupied a week; for it was not until the eighth day of the month that the regular services of the splendid ritual were commenced by the new high priest, who then offered upon the great altar the various kinds of sacrifices which the law required. In token of divine acceptance and complacency, a fire darted forth from that "glory" which represented the Lord's presence, and consumed the burnt offering. When the people saw this, "they shouted, and fell upon their faces." It was afterwards directed that the fire thus miraculously kindled should be kept up and employed in all the sacred services.

It seems to have been shortly after this that the chiefs of each tribe came, on successive days, and appeared before Moses and Aaron with a very considerable offering for the sacred service, contained in six carts, each drawn by two oxen—in all, seventy-two carts. The offering of every chief was precisely the same, consisting of a silver platter, weighing five pounds five ounces, troy; a silver sprinkling basin, of about three pounds, and a golden incense pot, of about five ounces. Besides this, their offering contained fine flour and incense, together with several animals, for a feast-offering. Their donations were received by Moses and Aaron, and set aside for the service of the tabernacle.

Not long after this a grievous calamity befel the priestly family. Nadab and Abihu, the two eldest sons of Aaron—those who were with Moses in the mount—went into the tabernacle to offer incense, having in their censers common fire, instead of that hallowed fire which had been miraculously kindled on the altar of burnt offering. This neglect was punished by a fire [perhaps lightning] from the Lord, which struck them dead on the spot, without injuring their robes, or the exterior of their persons. This may seem harsh; but it was obviously necessary at the commencement of these institutions that their sanctity should be protected, and the highest reverence for the divine presence inculcated, at whatever cost. "Holy will I be accounted," said the Lord on this occasion, "by those who approach me; and before all the people will I be glorified."* Aaron was silent. Moses ordered the bodies of his nephews to be carried outside the camp, and buried without any mourning or funeral ceremony. It is probable that the sin of Nadab and Abihu was caused and aggravated by drunkenness; for, immediately after this the Lord spoke *to Aaron*, forbidding that he or his sons should drink wine, or strong drink, when they were to officiate in the tabernacle, lest they died; suggesting that Nadab and Abihu had done so, and had died for it. All these circumstances appear to have occurred in the first month of the second year of the departure from Egypt.

At the beginning of the next month, Moses was directed to take a census of the adult male population—that is, of the men above twenty years of age, fit to bear arms. The reason for this probably was, that the last census (which enabled the historian to state that the number of such persons who left Egypt was 600,000) had been taken by the Egyptians, and was perhaps some years old. Moses and Aaron were assisted in this undertaking by twelve persons of consideration—heads of families—one from each tribe. The result of this census is valuable, from the information it gives of the relative numerical importance of the several tribes; thus,—

Reuben	46,500
Simeon	59,300
Gad	45,650
Judah	74,600
Issachar	54,400
Zebulon	57,400
Ephraim	40,500
Manasseh	32,200

* Leviticus, x. 1.

Benjamin	5,400
Dan	62,700
Asher	41,500
Naphtali	53,400
Total . . .	603,550

But as the Levites were not destined to bear arms, they are not included in this computation; but from an enumeration of that tribe taken for another purpose, we learn that the males above *a month* old did not exceed 22,273, so that the number of *adult* males of that tribe could hardly have been one-half that of the lowest of the other tribes.

When the population had thus been numbered, a regular organization of the camp was instituted. The whole host was formed into four great divisions, each consisting of three tribes, and taking its name from the principal tribe. These were to encamp, under their several banners, so as to form a hollow square, in the centre of which was the tabernacle, immediately around which the Levites were to encamp. The east side of the square was formed by the camp of Judah—containing the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon: Ephraim, with Manasseh and Benjamin, was on the west: on the north were Dan, Asher, and Naphtali; and on the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. This beautiful and orderly arrangement attracted the admiration of strangers, as we may gather from the exclamation of Baalam,—"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

It was also directed that in their removals the eastern division should first leave the ground, followed by the southern division, and that by the tabernacle, while the west and north divisions were to succeed in the rear. The removal of the pillar of cloud was to be the signal for their removal, and its resting for their rest.

During the protracted stay at this place, Moses was favoured with frequent intercourse with God, in which he received the body of laws which bear his name, and which were delivered not in any regular or systematic form but as occasion seemed to require or suggest. At first Moses received the command from the Lord upon the mountain, under the circumstance of great solemnity, which we have recorded. After his second stay of forty days upon the mountain, it does not appear that he again repaired thither to receive the divine commands. The next form in which these awful interviews were conducted commenced before this last visit to Sinai, and appears to have continued until the erection of the tabernacle. After the sin in the matter of the golden calf, Moses, it will be remembered, removed his tent to a considerable distance from the camp, and called it the Convention tent. He seems to have resided there for a time; and if we rightly collect the meaning of the sacred narrative, after this sin had been forgiven, he returned to live in the camp, but left this tent standing, under the charge of Joshua, who was always there. Whenever Moses went to consult the Lord, or to receive his commands, he proceeded to this tent; and when he entered the tent, the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door, while the Lord spoke therefrom to Moses. Whenever Moses left the camp to proceed to this tent, the people came to the doors of their own tents, and followed him with their eyes until he entered the tent; and when they saw the pillar of cloud come and settle at the door, they all arose and worshipped, every one at the door of his own tent*. After the erection of the tabernacle, Moses entered it whenever he sought counsel of God; and then he heard a VOICE speaking to him from between the cherubim above the ark, in the most holy place.

It seems to have been about this time† that Jethro, the Midianite, the father-in-law of Moses, found out that the famous prophet through whom the Lord had delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, was no other

* Exod. xxxiii. 7—11.

† The chapter which records this visit (Exod. xviii.) is placed between that which records the arrival at Rephidim and the victory over the Amalekites, and that which records the encampment at Sinai, *suggesting* that Jethro came while the Hebrews were at Rephidim. But Lightfoot has shown, from the clearest internal evidence and the historical connection, that the account of Jethro's visit is not related in the order of time—which order would have given it the place which we assign it in our narrative. —See Lightfoot's 'Harmony under A.M. 2515.'

than the husband of his daughter. No sooner did he learn this than he set forth, with his son Hobab, to convey to him his wife and two sons. They were all received very affectionately by Moses, who took his father-in-law to his tent, and gave him a full account of all which had occurred since their separation. And when the old man heard of the wonders which had been wrought for the deliverance of Israel, he blessed Jehovah, and acknowledged that he now knew him to be greater than all other gods. This sort of expression may imply that he had previously rendered him a divided worship, and, after all, falls short of the true Hebrew belief. That there was *no God* but Jehovah was that belief; but we see, always, that the highest point of doctrine which even the best of men, not Hebrews, could reach, was, that Jehovah was the *greatest* of the gods. Among the great differences of opinion and shades of belief, this was a broad and important distinction. In accordance with this conviction, Jethro delayed not to present to Jehovah burnt offerings and other sacrifices; after which Aaron and the elders of Israel came to pay their respects to the father-in-law of Moses, and to eat with him of the feast offerings.

During his stay in the camp, Jethro was much struck to observe the fatigue and anxiety which Moses underwent in sitting all day surrounded by a crowd of people to hear their complaints, and settle their differences, according to the statutes which had lately been promulgated. He warned him that this labour was too heavy for him, and that he could not with safety continue to perform it alone; and his judicious advice was, that he should commit their common and daily affairs to faithful and just men, who should, according to their ability, be appointed to act in regular subordination over the subdivisions of the people into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens — Moses himself withdrawing into the more high and distant place of one before whom only matters too difficult for the decision of the inferior judges were to be brought.

Moses saw the wisdom of this advice, and proceeded to act upon it. He stated to the people his inability to bear the burdensome charge of them and their contentions, and directed them to make choice, in their several tribes, of persons of known wisdom and prudence, whom he might appoint to be their rulers. They answered, "The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do;" and afterwards, in appointing the persons of whom they had made choice, he gave them an admirable charge, and instructed them fully in the duties they were to perform*.

Knowing they were about to journey in the wilderness of Paran, Moses was very anxious to engage his brother-in-law, Hobab, not to return to Midian with his father, but to remain and act as the guide of the Israelites through the wilderness; for although the guidance of the cloudy pillar was sufficient to indicate their general course, and the places for their encampments, it does not appear that its directions were so minute as to render the services of a person acquainted with the country of no value, especially in pointing out the places where water and fuel might be obtained. Hobab at first manifested some reluctance, which was at last overcome by the assurance that he should freely participate in the benefits which the Lord had promised to Israel.

* Compare Exod. xviii. with Deut. i. 9—18. From the ninth verse of this last passage it appears that the institution was proposed to the people, and adopted at the very time that their approaching departure from Sinai was made known to them. This of course confirms the place we have assigned to the transaction in our narrative.

CHAPTER V.

THE WANDERING.

THE Israelites remained at the foot of Mount Sinai eleven months and nineteen days. During this time the necessary laws were given; the tabernacle was set up for the palace of the King, JEHOVAH; the regular service of his court was established; the sanctions of the law were solemnly repeated; the people were numbered and mustered for the approaching war; the order of their encamping, breaking up, and marching, was accurately settled; and the whole constitution of the state was completed.

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites were ordered to break up their encampment, and proceed on their march, to take possession of the Promised Land.

Under the direction of the miraculous cloud, the ark went on in advance, to determine the line of march, and the places of encampment. When, at any time, the ark, following the movements of the pillared cloud, began to set forward, Moses was wont to exclaim, "Arise, O JEHOVAH, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee!" And when, under the same guidance, it rested, "Return, JEHOVAH, unto the many thousands of Israel!"

The general and leading command to depart for Sinai appears to have been orally delivered; but on other removals, consequent on that general direction, it was a sufficient intimation of the command to remove, when the miraculous cloud withdrew from off the tabernacle, and moved forward. Whenever this was noticed, the several tribes struck their tents, and began to pack up their moveables, while the priests and Levites were engaged in taking down the tabernacle, and in disposing its parts on the carriages in which they were to be removed; and others covered up, and otherwise prepared for removal, the ark, the altars, the table of shew-bread, and the chandelier, which were to be borne on the shoulders of the Levites. All this would probably occasion but little delay; for the rapidity and ease with which the pastoral nations strike their tents, and get ready for a march, is quite astonishing to those who dwell in towns. When all was ready, the repeated sounding of the silver trumpets notified the time when each of the four *camps* was to move off the ground, in the order noticed in a preceding page; each tribe under its own banner and chiefs. As the tabernacle and the sacred utensils proceeded in the earlier part of the line, all was set up and properly arranged at the new encampment before the rear arrived on the ground; and, indeed, as the several tribes certainly encamped as they arrived, the greater part of the encampment would be formed by the time that the rearward tribe came up to take its place.

Several serious occurrences took place during the march through the desert to the borders of Canaan; and all tending, more or less, to manifest the intractable and debilitated character which their long-continued, and still recent, servitude had produced in the Hebrews; and which a slavery imposing *personal* obligations always has produced. The true secret of much of their conduct was that they had no *public spirit*—none of that spirit which enables men to understand the necessity of making unusual exertions, and of undergoing great privations, for the attainment of the high objects set before them. Wanting this, they looked upon their leaders as children look towards their parents—as those who were bound to keep them in all comfort, and to make the paths they trod smooth and easy for them.

For nearly twelve months they had now remained much at their ease in the Sinai valleys, without any other general labour than the care of their flocks. As soon, therefore, as they had passed beyond the pleasant

and shady valleys of the peninsula, and were fairly engaged in the stern and naked desert, they began to complain of the hardships and fatigues of the journey, and of the obligation of decamping and encamping so often. At the third stage these murmurs became so strong that their Divine King judged some afflictive mark of his displeasure necessary; wherefore he caused a fire (probably kindled by lightning) to break forth, and rage with great fury among the tents on the outskirts of the camp. In this the people recognised the hand of God, and interceded with Moses, at whose prayer the flames subsided. In memory of this the place received the name of Taberah [*the burning*].

It will be remembered that there were a considerable number of Egyptian vagabonds and other foreigners (probably runaway slaves) in the Hebrew host. The next affair, which seems to have followed the former very soon, commenced among these dangerous characters, but soon involved the mass of the Israelites. They became discontented with the manna. Pleasant though it were, the sameness of their diet disgusted them, and, heedless of the necessity of their circumstances, they longed for the palatable varieties of food which they had enjoyed in Egypt. The excellent meats of that country, and the abundant fish of its river — the luscious and cooling melons, the onions, the leeks, the garlick, and other fruits and vegetables of that rich soil, they had all been accustomed to eat "freely," so abundant were they, and so cheap. That they should grow tired of one particular kind of food, however delicious, when they had been used to such variety, and that they should look back upon their former enjoyments with some degree of longing and regret, is quite natural, and might not be blameworthy; but nothing can more strikingly show the unmanly character which bondage had produced in the then existing race of Hebrews, than that such merely sensual impulses were able to gain the mastery over them to such a degree as utterly to blind and confound their understanding. With childish weeping and unreasoning clamour they expressed their longing for the lost pleasures of Egypt, and their distaste of the manna, which had for so many months formed their principal food. As this clamour broke out so soon after the departure from the Sinai valleys in which they had so long been encamped, it seems very likely that they had secretly entertained the expectation that a change of scene would bring a change of food, and that they were much disappointed to find that the manna, and that only, continued to be supplied wherever they went.

The conduct of the people on this occasion was deeply displeasing to God: and Moses manifested more than usual discouragement and annoyance. His address to God on this occasion shows this, and is not altogether free from fretfulness. He rather murmurs at the heavy task which had been imposed upon him, of managing this unreasoning multitude, and declares himself unequal to it. In answer to this, God proposed to strengthen his authority by a council of seventy elders, to whom a portion of his own spirit should be formally given; and as to the people, a promise was indignantly made them, that on the morrow, and for a month to come, they should eat meat to the full. In reply to some doubts, which Moses ventured to intimate, as to the feasibility of supplying so large a multitude, the emphatic answer was, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short?"

Accordingly, on the next day the seventy elders were assembled about the door of the tabernacle, when the Lord, as he had promised, "came down in a cloud, and spake unto Moses; and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders;" not that thereby the divine spirit in Moses sustained any diminution, for, as the rabbins aptly illustrate, he was as "a burning and a shining light," from which many other lights might be kindled without its own brilliancy being lessened. And when the Seventy had received this spirit, they began to prophesy,—not in the sense of foretelling things to come, but of speaking on Divine things with some of that spontaneous fervour and eloquence which had hitherto been peculiar to Moses.

This council having been appointed for the

express purpose of assisting Moses in the discharge of the arduous duties of his peculiar office, died with him. In the history of the succeeding periods, there is not the slightest mention of such a council, not even in those times when it must have acted a most important part, had it been in existence. When there was no chief magistrate, the whole business of the government would have belonged, properly, to this council of state. But we find no trace of such a council in the history of those times. There were also transactions of the deepest interest to the Hebrew commonwealth, in which such a council, if it had existed, could not fail to have been actively engaged; and if so engaged, it is incredible that the several historians should have agreed in that profound silence concerning it which they have observed. The rabbins, therefore, are not entitled to credit, when they assert that the council instituted by Moses continued uninterrupted to the latest times after the captivity, and that the same institution was perpetuated in the *Sanhedrim*, which existed after the times of the Maccabees.

The same day came the promised supply of meat—given not in kindness but in anger. As on a former occasion it consisted of immense flocks of quails, which, being wearied with their flight across the Red Sea, flew so low and heavily that vast quantities of them were easily caught by the people. So abundant was the supply that not only were they enabled to glut themselves for the time, but to collect a quantity for future use. We are told that "they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp." This was, perhaps, to let them dry, or to allow the salt to settle before they potted them away. We are not accustomed to hear of birds being preserved in any way, but it is remarkable that Herodotus* describes it as usual among the Egyptians to eat, undressed, *quails*, ducks, and small birds which they had preserved with salt. This is confirmed by the sculptures, where men are represented as in the act of preserving birds in this manner, and depositing them in jars. No doubt the Hebrews followed the same process, with which they had become acquainted in Egypt.

In the very height of their gormandising, or, as the Scripture expresses it, "while the flesh was yet between their teeth," a grievous plague was sent among them, whereby great numbers were destroyed. It is probable that the very indulgence for which they had longed was made the instrument of their punishment, and that the extraordinary mortality was, under the Divine control, occasioned by the excess of the people in the use of a kind of food so different from that on which they had for so many previous months been principally fed.

From this event the place took the name of Kibroth-hattaavah (*the graves of longing*), because in that place were buried numbers of the people who had longed for flesh.

The next principal encampment was at a place called Hazeroth. Here "a root of bitterness" sprung up, even in the very family of Moses. His sister Miriam, "the prophetess," had naturally taken the place of a chief woman in Israel: but when Moses had been joined by his wife, she began to feel or fear that her influence and station would be undermined. She therefore gave utterance to reflections which had the obvious tendency of throwing disgrace upon him for his connection with one who was not a daughter of Israel, but a Cushite (or Arabian) stranger. This was certainly a disadvantageous connection for the leader of such a people as the Hebrews; and, if brought prominently forward, and dilated upon in the ears of the people, was calculated to impair the influence of Moses, and to create dangerous jealousies,—the rather as the brother of the woman, and the clan of which he was the head, were present in the camp, and were treated with distinction and honour. The jealousy of Miriam is less strange than the fact that Aaron encouraged her, and sided with her. This may make us suspect that the cause of discontent may have lain deeper than appears; and that both Aaron and Miriam must have been discontented at, and willing to impair, the superiority of their younger brother. Aaron could not but know that, by the theory of

* Herod. ii. 77.

the law, he was by virtue of his office the chief person in the state; and that the political functions of that office remained in abeyance while Moses occupied that high and extraordinary station, which, indeed, the Divine appointment compelled him to fill, but which the law itself did not recognise as involved in the ordinary course of administrative government. It is, however, less probable that Aaron and his sister sought to supersede Moses, than to obtain an equal share with him in the actual government of the people. Something of this is involved in their claim to be "prophets" equally with him. We are not told that Moses said or did anything on this occasion; and this appears to have been remarked by some one of a later day, who in the original narrative has introduced the observation, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."*

Nor needed Moses take any part in the matter, for the Divine Voice, without any previous communication to him, summoned them all three to the door of the tabernacle. There Aaron and Miriam were rebuked from the sacred cloud, and were reminded that, although they had indeed been favoured with divine communications, yet the Lord had made himself known to them only in visions and dreams, whereas to Moses he had spoken mouth to mouth, openly, and not in dark sayings, that he might clearly perceive the will of Jehovah. When the voice ceased it was found that Miriam had been smitten with leprosy. On this, Aaron, greatly humbled, confessed to Moses the foolishness and presumption of their mutual conduct, and begged him to intercede with God for the recovery of their sister. Moses did so; but as it was proper that the punishment should be as public as the offence, he could only obtain the promise that she should recover after she had been shut out from the camp seven days as a polluted leper. This was done: and during the seven days of her exclusion the camp remained stationary.

The distance from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea, on the southern border of Canaan, was usually reckoned not more than eleven days' journey; but as it was "the time of the first ripe grapes" when the Hebrew host arrived at Kadesh, they must have spent five or six months on this journey.

When they reached that place Moses apprised them that they were now on the borders of their promised inheritance, and exhorted them to be of good courage in the acts of war by which they were to take possession. The elders gave the very judicious advice that, before any warlike operations were commenced, twelve persons, one from each tribe, should be sent to explore the country; and this counsel, having been sanctioned by the Divine command, was carried into effect. In those days, and long after, the office of a spy was counted highly honourable, and, as a post of danger and difficulty, was sought by heroes of the highest rank†. So, in the present instance, the persons chosen for this arduous service were all men of note, "rulers" in their several tribes. The charge which Moses gave them before they departed deserves great admiration from the skill with which, in a very few words, it states the points to which it was requisite they should direct their especial attention. Go up "southward, and go up into the mountain [Lebanon], and see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean; whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."‡

The spies appear to have accomplished their purpose without molestation. They traversed the whole extent of the country to Lebanon. On their return southward, they passed through the valley of Eshcol, where they were so much struck by the size and beauty of the vines, that they broke off a branch to take with them to the camp, and to prevent the attached clusters from being bruised, bore it between two on a staff.

After an absence of forty days they re-

* Num. xii. 3.

† See Homer, *passim*.

‡ Num. xiii. 17—20.

turned to the camp. The grapes, the pomegranates, and the figs, which they brought with them as specimen fruits of the promised land, must have formed a most gratifying sight to the Hebrews; for although similar fruits were not unknown in Egypt, they are far inferior both in appearance and quality to those of Palestine. It has indeed been disputed, on the authority of some ancient writers, that Egypt afforded any vines; and if this had been true, we should have had a still stronger illustration of the delight with which the Hebrews must have beheld and tasted the fruit of the very excellent vines of Palestine. But that the vine was known in Egypt, and the juice of the grape expressed, is evinced by Gen. xl. 9—11, as well as by the paintings and sculptures of that ancient country, in which vineyards and vine-arbours are often represented, and the scenes of the vintage—the gathering of the grapes, and the treading in the wine-press—are very strikingly depicted, so as to convey interesting illustrations of the various allusions to the vintage which the sacred books contain.

The description which the spies gave to their eager listeners of the country through which they had passed was highly favourable, especially when regarded as proceeding from men who had been brought up in one of the most fertile countries in the world. They described it as a good land—a land flowing "with milk and honey." If this account of the land, accompanied by the sight of its pleasant fruits, excited the people to advance and take possession, their zeal was too speedily damped by the further account of the great stature, strength, and courage of the inhabitants, and of the lofty position and strong fortifications of their cities.

A recent traveller informs us that on coming from Arabia, where the villages are, for the most part, found in valleys, he was much struck by seeing the villages and towns of Palestine standing loftily upon the hills. The same circumstance seems to have been strongly remarked by the Hebrew spies; and their further statement respecting the strong walls of the towns, must be received with the licence which results from the fact that they and their auditors were Bedouins in their military habits and ideas, and that to all such people the slightest appearance of a wall or fortification is regarded as an insurmountable obstacle*.

Although we may well believe that the fears of the spies magnified the stature of the Canaanites, their impression must have had some foundation in fact. It is hence, and for other reasons, probable that the inhabitants of the land, or at least certain races among them, were taller, and possibly of larger build than either themselves or the Egyptians. As to the Egyptians, it appears from the mummies, that they were generally a light, medium-sized people, with very rare instances of a stature above the middle-size, or of large-boned, or muscular men; and with respect to the Israelites themselves, they were exposed to the same conditions which influenced the development of the Egyptian figure; and it may be remarked that the same circumstances which tended to promote their increase in Egypt, tended not less to check their growth. To this we may add that, even at the present day, very few men among the Jews rise above the middle European stature, while a more than ordinary proportion fall below it. The same absence of tall or large figures is also observed among the Arab tribes, which makes them appear rather a small race, although they generally seem to reach our medium standard. From this we think it may result that the appearance among the Canaanites of a much larger proportion of tall and large-built men than they had been accustomed to see, would not inadequately account for the report of the Hebrew spies, after due allowance has been made for the exaggeration which their fears produced.

The people were filled with alarm by this account. They appear to have been unprepared to expect that any formidable obstacles would be opposed to their taking possession of the land promised to their fathers; and,

* "The walls of Graine [a small town at the head of the Persian Gulf], which were only of mud, and which, in the rainy season, frequently crumbled down in large breaches, were, nevertheless, beheld and accounted by the Wahabees as impregnable ramparts." Sir H. Jones Brydges, 'Hist. of the Wahabees.'

utterly unmindful that the promises of their Divine King, confirmed by their past experience of his power, assured to them the victory in every conflict undertaken with his consent, they regarded as hopeless the enterprise before them, and abandoned themselves to despair. With extraordinary infatuation and cowardice, they believed themselves certain to fall by the sword of the Canaanites, and that their women and children would be enslaved. They even went so far as to suspect that this was really the Divine intention concerning them, and that it was only because the Lord hated them that he had brought them out of the land of Egypt. Caleb and Joshua, who had acted as spies for the two leading tribes of Judah and Ephraim, vainly endeavoured to counteract the effect which the report of the other ten had produced. Vainly did they assure the people that the obstacles were by no means so formidable as they had been led to apprehend; and as vainly did Moses direct their attention to the almighty power of that arm by which they had hitherto been guided and delivered. They would not be encouraged. This immense host spent the following night in tears, crying at times, "Would God that we had died in Egypt!" or "Would God we had died in this wilderness!"

The general discontent and alarm soon ripened into a most dangerous insurrection, and at last they formed the monstrous resolution of appointing a leader to conduct them back to their bondage in Egypt. They, indeed, went so far as actually to appoint a leader (perhaps one of the ten spies) for the purpose*. "Verily this race were well worthy the rods of their Egyptian taskmasters, to whom they were so willing to return," we might say, did we not consider that it was by these rods that their spirits had been broken. Spiritless, however, as they were,—unfit as they were for action, and unwilling to be guided, the gross infatuation of their present course is most amazing. When they turned to fulfil their desperate purpose, could they expect that cloud would continue to guide them, the manna to feed them, and the "flinty rocks" to pour forth water for them? And, if they were unmindful of these things, what reception could they expect to meet from the Egyptians—all whose first-born had been slain, and whose fathers, brothers, and sons had perished in the Red Sea on their account? They might well expect that, if their lives were spared by that unforgiving people, their bondage would be made far more bitter, and their chains far heavier than they ever had been.

When their intention was announced, Moses and Aaron fell to the ground on their faces before all the people. Caleb and Joshua rent their clothes with grief and indignation, and renewed their former statements and remonstrances; but so mad were the people that they were about to stone these faithful men, and probably Moses and Aaron, who lay prostrate before them, as well, when—in that moment of intense excitement—the glory of JEHOVAH appeared in the cloud above the tabernacle, arresting every purpose, and infusing a new and present fear into every heart.

From that cloud their doom was pronounced. At the vehement entreaties of Moses their lives were not swept away at one immediate stroke. But still, it should be even as they had said. All that generation—all the men above twenty years of age when they left Egypt,—should be cut off from their portion in that rich inheritance which they had so basely intended to forego; they should all die in that wilderness—all leave their bones amidst its sands and solitudes, among which it was their doom to wander forty years (dated from the time of leaving Egypt), until none of them remained alive. From this extraordinary doom, which fixed to every man the extreme limit of his possible existence, and avowedly gave time no object but their deaths, Joshua and Caleb were excepted. Thus the two on whom they were about to inflict death, were destined to survive them all, and to become the chiefs and leaders of the new generation, on whom the inheritance of the promises was to devolve. The other ten spies, whose discouragements had formed the proximate cause of the insurrection, were smitten by some

* Neh. ix. 17.

sudden death, in which the people recognised a punishment from God.

The people were thus made sensible of the folly of their past conduct. But this conviction had not, in the first instance, any salutary operation. For they attributed this doom to the cowardice they had displayed, rather than to its real cause—their distrust of the sufficiency of their Divine King to perform the promises he had made. Therefore, with some hope, perhaps, of reversing the sentence which had been passed upon them, they valorously determined to attack the enemy forthwith—for the border Canaanites had already taken alarm, and, without taking any offensive measures against so apparently formidable a host as that of the Hebrews, remained in a state of preparation on the hills, ready to guard the passes of the country. Moses earnestly dissuaded them from this enterprise, as contrary to the declared intention of God, as well as against his command, that they should withdraw from the frontier and retire into the desert. But they persisted; perhaps from a latent desire, in their present fit of desperation, to try whether they might not be able, even on their own resources, to arrest the doom which had gone forth against them. They were repulsed by the Canaanites with great slaughter. The ebullition of courage under which they had acted would have been but of short duration, even had it been attended with better success in the first instance. By their repulse, they were very forcibly instructed that they were, of themselves, unequal to the conquest of the country; and were hence induced to yield a sullen acquiescence in a measure, with which they would hardly have been satisfied unless this salutary conviction of their own weakness had been realized.

Thus they turned from the borders of "the pleasant land" to wander for thirty-eight years in the Arabian wildernesses.

The history of these years is very briefly told in the original narrative. In Numbers xxxiii. there is a list of the principal stations of the Israelites, from the time they left Egypt till they arrived on the banks of the Jordan. It, therefore, includes the places of their principal encampment during these years of wandering. Much pains have been bestowed by some writers on the investigation of this list, and in the endeavour to trace the various names which are there given. The result scarcely seems worth the labour. The names cannot be traced; and if they could, it appears of little consequence to know at what places the Hebrew host encamped while they were wandering to and fro in the deserts, between the Sinai mountains and the borders of Canaan, without any definite purpose, save to consume the time and the people, or to seek an exchange of pasture ground.

During the long interval of the wandering, several new laws were promulgated. Only two of the incidents which occurred during this period are deemed of sufficient consequence to be recorded; and of these, neither the time nor place is named.

The first was the case of the sabbath-breaker who was found gathering sticks on the sabbath-day. Although this crime had been forbidden, no punishment had been annexed to it; and therefore the man was kept in custody till the Divine commands could be taken. The order received was that he should be taken without the camp, and there stoned to death. This was done.

The other was an affair of far greater importance; as it indicated a wide-spread dissatisfaction among the hereditary chiefs of the people, ending in a most formidable conspiracy to wrest the priesthood from Aaron, and the civil power from the hand of Moses.

One Korah, a family-chief of the same branch of the Levitical tribe to which Moses and Aaron belonged, seems to have been the head of this conspiracy. The other leaders were Dathan, Abiram, and On, all of the tribe of Reuben; who were probably induced to come forward on the ground of the right of primogeniture—the extinction of which by Jacob they would not seem to have recognised to the extent which the existing distribution of civil and sacerdotal authority indicated. No less than two hundred and fifty more of the principal and most influential chiefs of different tribes were drawn into

this combination; and it seems to have been popular with the people as soon as its object was avowed.

That object appears to us to have been misunderstood by all the writers to whose statements on the subject we have had occasion to refer. We find it stated as an attempt of the conspiring chiefs to usurp the sacerdotal functions, or else the civil and sacerdotal functions as jointly exercised by Moses and Aaron. But we cannot see on what claim of this sort, chiefs of tribes so opposed in interests as those of Levi and Reuben were likely to agree, and not only they, but chiefs of probably all the different tribes as well. If the pretension was the priesthood, who was the claimant? Not Korah; for then would the Reubenites, who had the *hereditary* claim, have supported *his* claim? Not the Reubenites; for then was the proud Levite likely to support this new claim to a dignity which was already in his tribe? And then, if the object had been the possession of paramount civil power by either of these parties, was this an object which the two most powerful tribes, Judah and Ephraim, were likely to support, or which they were not far more likely to oppose? We consider that it was, altogether, an attempt to overthrow the general government as established by the law; and that this took the form of an attack of the priesthood, chiefly because that was the more obvious and established feature of the general government. The authority of Moses was probably felt to be merely an incident, for the transmission of which the law made no provision. Although, therefore, even his authority was not unassaulted, it was less the ostensible object of the combination than that of his brother. Under this view it will not appear that any one of the confederated parties aspired to the priesthood; but that there was a general conspiracy among the leading men of several tribes to restore things to their original footing when the priesthood and the civil authority went together with the birthright, throughout the larger and smaller sectional divisions — tribes, clans, and families of the people. Their charge against Moses and Aaron was that they had taken away the former liberties of the people; which, being interpreted, means, that they had organised their loosely compacted tribes into a nation, and subjected them to a general government. Apart from such an explanation as this, it seems impossible to understand the equal pretensions of *all* the parties to the exercise of sacerdotal functions; without the least intimation that they all concurred in supporting the claims of any one particular party. But although there are obvious considerations which preclude the supposition that the appropriation of the priesthood to himself was the *avowed* object of Korah, in which he was supported by the other parties; there is much reason to conclude, from the manner in which Moses (when he saw through his designs) spoke to him, that this was his real and ulterior object.

There are indications that the Reubenites, while they desired as heartily as the others to overturn the existing plan of government, were rather afraid of the ulterior objects of Korah and of making common cause with him. Perhaps they were fearful that by so doing they should seem to compromise what they wished to regard as the self-evident character of the claims they derived from the usual laws of primogeniture.

In short, with some attention, we may perceive three parties agreeing to overturn the present ecclesiastical and civil government, and agreeing also in one common pretence, the liberties of the people; but having their several grounds of discontent, and differing, secretly at least, in their final objects. Korah appears to have felt that since the Levites were set apart as a sacred tribe, and the priesthood confined to one family in that tribe, his own rank therein* gave him a preferable claim to that dignity. The two hundred and fifty chiefs who joined him appear to have desired to reclaim, as a right of primogeniture, the sacerdotal privileges which had been transferred to the tribe of Levi. And the Reubenites probably felt aggrieved that Moses in all his arrangements acted on the will of Jacob as a reality,

* Josephus says he was wealthy, and that he was older than Moses.

excluding Reuben from the ordinary pre-eminence of the first-born, and placing Judah and the sons of Joseph before him.

When the conspirators judged things ripe for an open rupture, they met in a body, and, presenting themselves before Moses and Aaron, they upbraided them with their unjust ambition, in engrossing all power in their own hands, and excluding the rest of the people, who were all, as much as they, the people of God. Moses was much astonished at this speech; but he administered in reply a cutting rebuke to the ambitious Korah, and assured him and his confederates that, however they might gloss this matter to themselves and others, their proceedings were really levelled against the government of the King JEHOVAH. To Him, who was the author of the appointments of which they complained, he would leave it to decide who should be the ministers of his service, and who should be held worthy to approach his presence. He therefore desired them to assemble on the morrow at the tabernacle, with censers, to offer incense to God, who would doubtless take the occasion of making his will known.

It is observable that the chiefs of Reuben, Dathan and Abiram*, were not present on this occasion. But whatever was the ground of their absence, they took care it should be known that it was not from any indifference to the cause in which they were engaged: for, when Moses sent for them to be present on the morrow with the others, they returned a very smart refusal, in terms which threw much light on the state of feeling that then prevailed:—"We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?—We will not come up." This answer, involving an appeal to the misconceptions and prejudices of the people, was manifestly framed for *their* ears more than for those of Moses. And as, by "the mer" whom, they allege, Moses intended to blind, Korah and the others are doubtless denoted, they appear to have disapproved of the proposed trial, of the result of which they might well entertain some doubts, and to have thought it the better course not to commit their own claims and pretensions to the same issue.

Mild and forbearing as Moses usually was in all that concerned himself, his indignation rose very high when he received this reproachful message. He called God to witness the injustice of the charge it contained, since so far had he been from using his power to enrich or aggrandise himself, that he had as yet reaped nothing but care and sorrow from it.

The morrow came; and all Israel anxiously awaited what that day might bring forth. Korah and his two hundred and fifty associates were true to their appointment, and appeared before the tabernacle with censers. They were attended by a vast host of their more active partisans, who seem, from the expressions employed, to have represented the sympathies and sentiments of the bulk of the community, who appear to have stood awaiting the event before their tents.

Moses and Aaron were with or near the conspirators, where they stood prepared to offer incense. But at that moment, the Shechinah, that glorious symbol of the Divine presence, which usually abode in the inmost sanctuary, appeared at the door of the tabernacle; and a voice was heard therefrom, commanding Moses and Aaron,—"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." On hearing this they both fell upon their faces, and entreated that he would not be wroth with the misguided people for the evil into which they had been drawn by one ambitious man. A compliance with this prayer, it respecting all but the ringleaders, was involved in the direction which they received to go to the tents of Dathan and Abiram, and warn the people off

* The other Reubenite, On, is not named except in the first instance. It is generally thought that he separated from his party after he heard what Moses said. The rabbins allege that his wife persuaded him to relinquish his part in this dangerous enterprise.

from the neighbourhood of their tents. Warned by the supernatural appearance at the entrance of the tabernacle, the people obeyed. Moses then addressed them, and appealed for the authority of his commission to the prodigy which was about to follow. No sooner had he spoken, than the earth opened and engulphed the present rebels and all that belonged to them: while at the same instant, Korah and his party, who remained before the tabernacle, were struck dead by fire from heaven. Thus awfully perished the men who wished to make subservient to their own ends the discontent which they excited among the people.

But even this awful example was not sufficient to allay the ferment which had been excited. It is true that the mutinous mob fled with horror and alarm from the doom which befel their leaders. But, with a degree of infatuation and insane hardihood, which is rarely to be found but among the blind instruments of popular commotions, they assembled tumultuously the very next day, and clamoured against Moses and Aaron, saying:—"Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Yesterday they had been spared: but the welfare, the very existence of the nation, required that a memorable example to all future time should now be made. God, therefore, sent a fearful plague among them, which spread rapidly through their ranks, and before which they fell down in sudden death.

No sooner did the brothers perceive that the wrath of God was raging among the riotous crowd, than Aaron, at the instance of Moses, took a censer, and, filled with the most deep compassion and animated by all-conquering faith, he therewith rushed into the crowd, and planted himself between the living and the dead, as if to stay that storm of death, and say, "thus far shalt thou come, and no further." With this noble act God was well pleased, and stayed the hand of the destroyer; but not until fourteen hundred people had fallen before him.

It was evident that to persons of the most consequence and influence in the nation, the appointment of Aaron to the hereditary priesthood was so distasteful, that only the most sensible evidence that the appointment was indeed divine, could bring them to submit to it. One would think that the recent events would have been sufficient to convince the most doubtful of this. Perhaps for the time it was so. But God was pleased, by a new prodigy, to afford an abiding testimony of his preference. None but the princes of the tribes were likely to think their claims to that high office equal or preferable to those of Aaron; or, at all events, if they, who were highest in dignity, were satisfied, or silenced, none of those below them could fairly make complaint. The princes of the twelve tribes and Aaron were therefore commanded to take, each of them, an almond rod, and write thereon the name of his tribe. These rods, with Aaron's rod among them, were solemnly deposited before the ark of the covenant. The next morning they were brought forth from thence; and it was found that while the other rods remained in their former state, the rod of Aaron was covered with leaves, and blossoms, and ripened fruit. All the people admired this mild and significant prodigy, and peace was re-established in Israel. The rod was directed to be laid up in the sanctuary, that it might remain an abiding testimony of the divine appointments, which do not, indeed, seem to have been ever after called in question.

At length the fortieth year from the deliverance commenced. By this time the doom of the former generation had been accomplished. They had all died gradually away. The new race which now stood in their place were scarcely less turbulent and rebellious than their fathers; but they had grown up in the free air of the desert, the chain of bondage had not rusted their souls, and their necks had not been fretted by the yoke. They were therefore more hardy in their frames, and in their hearts more courageous and enterprising than their fathers. They had also been brought up under the theocracy; and its forms and principles were familiar to them, however imperfectly they were as yet imbued with its spirit.

As the appointed time drew nigh, they

were conducted again to Kadesh,—that place between the borders of Canaan and Edom where their fathers had received their doom, to die in the wilderness.

Miriam died soon after their arrival at this place, and was buried there. The Jews have a notion that she was the legislatrix and ruler of the Hebrew women, as her brother was of the men.

While they tarried at this place water failed them. There the recollections of what the elder portion of the population had seen, and of what the younger had heard of Egypt and of its abundant and glorious river, revived, and they assailed Moses with the old reproaches, because he had not suffered them to remain in that fruitful land, but had brought them into that "evil place," which was, they complained, "no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." Moses and Aaron received the command of God to take the old wonder-working rod or staff [not that which had budded], and smite therewith a certain rock from which water should flow in abundance. They did this; but in doing it manifested some degree of impatience and distrust of Jehovah, in consequence of which they were told that they should not be allowed to enter the promised land. To Moses, however, was granted the indulgence of viewing that land afar off, although not permitted to set his foot upon it.

Palestine seems at this time to have been of difficult access on the southern frontier. Besides being, as we have elsewhere described, a hilly region, traversed by narrow passes and valleys, and therefore of comparatively easy defence, the hills were crowned by forts and fortified towns which were at that time considered strong and formidable. It was also occupied by brave and vigilant warriors, by whom every foot of ground was likely to be disputed. In this southern part of the country, near Hebron, were the tall sons of Anak, the very sight of whom had struck the spies with terror thirty-eight years before. In advancing in this direction, they would also have their old and much dreaded enemies, the Philistines, on their left hand; and they were not likely to remain quiet witnesses of the progress of the Israelites in that quarter. From the concurrence of these causes, it did actually happen that this quarter of the country was not fully subdued till the time of David. This country also, in many respects, was less desirable and fertile than the more central parts.

On all these accounts together, it was manifestly less desirable that the Hebrew host should enter at the south, and fight their way northward through the whole extent of the country, than that they should at once, if possible, establish themselves in the central part of the country, which was not only the richest, but the least defensible, and from thence extend their power right and left, into the portions of country between which they would thus be thrown.

This was actually the course which was determined to be taken. But to this end it was necessary that the Israelites should take a circuit round the southern end of the Dead Sea, and march northward along its eastern border, in order to pass the Jordan and establish themselves at once in the very heart of the country to be conquered; and in effecting this design it would be desirable to pass through the kingdom of the Edomites, and necessary to traverse those of the Moabites and Amorites, nations with whom the Hebrews had no quarrel, and with two of which, as being allied to themselves by blood, they were expressly forbidden to wage war.

The mountains of Seir, which the Edomites at this time occupied, bound the valley of Araba on the east, and extend all the way from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf. They offer only one valley through which a large and encumbered army could pass from the western to the eastern plains. This is the valley of El Ghoeyr, which opens into the Araba at about forty-five miles to the south of the Dead Sea. As it afforded by far the most convenient and shortest route which the Israelites could take, it doubtless forms "the king's highway" through which Moses desired from the Edomites permission for the Israelites to pass. The negotiation,

if it may be so called, for this purpose, is curious from the illustration which it offers of the practices which then prevailed as to the very important point of international law, involved in the conditions on which an army might expect permission to march, for warlike purposes, through the territories of a neutral or friendly power.

At this time the eighth king of the Edomites was upon the throne. Eleven princes were subordinate to him; so that the king was, in fact, no more than the chief of twelve princes,—a relic of the patriarchal form of government to which the Edomites, in common with all ancient nations, were originally subject*. This empire seems, in the time of Moses, to have been in a very flourishing condition. Mention is incidentally made of eight considerable cities, and also of fields, vineyards, and highways in this country†.

Moses had previously been cautioned by God not in any way to meddle injuriously with the Edomites; for Mount Seir had been given to Esau, in the possession of which his descendants were not to be disturbed. Therefore, in marching through or along their country, they were charged to maintain a strict discipline, and to pay scrupulously for whatever food or water they required.

Accordingly, when Moses sent from Kadesh, to request from the King of Edom a free passage through his territory, the ambassadors were charged with the following message,—"Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time: and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers: And when we cried unto JEHOVAH he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: *we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway; we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.*"

The king of Edom was afraid to admit such an immense body of armed men into his country, and sent a plain refusal to let them pass, and threatened to oppose by arms any attempt they might make to do so.

The Israelites, whose experience in the desert had made them extremely sensible of the value of water, and of the necessity of husbanding a limited supply, suspected that the principal fear of the king was, lest they should exhaust or waste the water in the wells and reservoirs from which the inhabitants derived their supply of water during the season in which the rivers were dried up. They, therefore, sent back to assure him, that they desired nothing but leave "to go through on their feet," and that they would most willingly pay for whatever water they and their cattle might need. But the king was inexorable, and made a display of his forces to intimidate them. The frontier was so strong on this side that it was hardly possible for the Hebrews to force a passage, if they had been so minded. It was, therefore, resolved to take a circuitous route—that is, to return southward, and pass to the other side of these mountains at the point where they terminate, near the head of the Elanitic Gulf. They would then turn northward, and march along the borders of the high plains, which lie beyond these mountains eastward.

They, therefore, proceeded down the broad valley of Araba, till they reached the foot of Mount Hor, where they encamped. To the top of that mountain, Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar proceeded, according to Divine direction, in the sight of all the people, and there Aaron died and was buried. The tomb which is now seen afar on the top of that mountain, in all probability marks the spot of his death and sepulture. The Moslems, who highly honour the memory of Aaron, hold this tomb in great reverence, and offer sacrifices there.

Thus died a man rendered eminent by the circumstances in which he was placed, and by the important part he took in the deliverance of Israel, and in the establishment

* Gen. xvii. 20, xxxvi. 31—44.
† Gen. xxxvi. 31—39; Num. xx. 17, 21, 22.

of the Hebrew commonwealth. If his unequal temperament, and the facility of his disposition, disqualified him for the higher place which his younger brother so ably filled, and amply justifies and explains the divine preference, we must still acknowledge that the services which he rendered were neither few nor unimportant, and were, of their kind, indispensably necessary.

From the place which the circumstance occupies in the narrative, it would seem that it was while they were encamped at this place, although other considerations would rather indicate that it was at Kadesh, that the outposts of the Hebrew camp were attacked by one of the Canaanitish nations, on the southern border of Palestine. Their leader is called the king of Arad; and most of the Jewish writers think they were a tribe of Amalekites, which, under all the circumstances, is not very unlikely. This attack was so far successful that the Canaanites were able to carry off several Israelites as captives. On this, the Hebrews put the whole invading tribe, with their cities, under that solemn vow of devotement to utter destruction, under its proper name of *cherem*. This vow they were enabled to accomplish when they ultimately came again in contact with the same people, in the great warfare which they waged against the Canaanites. Then they utterly destroyed this people and their cities, and called the name of the land Hormah,—*the devoted place**.

The people having considered their wandering in the desert nearly at an end, and having made up their minds for a shorter and more pleasant route, were greatly disappointed at this retrograde movement—this delay in their anticipated change of life and diet, and renewal of the fatigues and privations which they had deemed to be all but ended. As they pursued their difficult way down the waterless and sandy Araba their discontent gathered strength, and at last began to vent itself in the usual manner: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread." For this offence the Lord refused to protect them from the mortal bites of the serpents which infested the region to which they now came, and which are described by Burckhardt as still abounding in a neighbouring district †. They are called "fiery serpents," either from the inflammation caused by their bites or from their fiery and splendid appearance. Under punishment this generation behaved better than their fathers. In the present case they went to Moses, confessed that they had sinned, and implored him to intercede for them. On this, Moses, at the command of God, made the figure of a serpent in brass, and elevated it upon a pole in the midst of the camp; and it was the Divine appointment that whoever looked upon this ensign, which Christ declares to have been designed as an emblem of Himself crucified ‡, instantly recovered of his mortal wound. But many of the people had died before this mysterious remedy was given. The brazen serpent was preserved as a memorial of this miracle till the time of Hezekiah, who ordered it to be destroyed on account of the superstitious regard which the Israelites then paid to it §.

Corrected by this experience, the people went on patiently the remainder of their way. When, having rounded the mountains, on the south, they turned northward, marching along the eastern and more exposed frontier of Edom, the descendants of Esau were afraid to molest or irritate them; but, on the contrary, brought them provisions and water for sale ‖. In like manner, the few inhabitants now found in that quarter derive much profit from the sale of the produce of their fields and orchards to the great caravan which yearly marches the same road on its way between Damascus and Mecca ¶.

The desert wanderings of the Israelites may be considered to have ended when they arrived at the brook Zared, a stream which flows towards the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and which at this time seems to

* Comp. Num. xxi. 1—3; Josh. xii. 14; Judg. i. 16, 17.

† 'Travels in Syria,' pp. 499, 500.
‡ John iii. 14, 15.
§ 2 Kings xviii. 4.
‖ Deut. ii. 29.
¶ Burckhardt, p. 405.

have formed the boundary between the territories of Edom and Moab. Along the borders and in the valley of this stream they encamped. Here, before entering the land of Moab, the Israelites were warned that this land formed no part of their promised inheritance. It had been given to the descendants of Lot, whom they were charged not to molest. The Moabites, on their part, offered no opposition to the march of the Hebrews through their territory; though it may be suspected that it was less good will than fear that prevented their refusal. So the Israelites pursued their march to the banks of the river Arnon, where they encamped.

In former times the territories of Moab had extended considerably to the north of that river. But before this, a division of the Amorites, being probably driven thereto by the increase of their numbers in Canaan, had crossed the Jordan in search of a new settlement. They expelled the descendants of Lot from all that part of their territory which lay to the north of the Arnon, and occupied it in their room. The Amorites were among the Canaanites, against whom the Israelites were to wage an exterminating war. But this applied to them only as inhabitants of Canaan; for they made no claim of the country east of the Jordan, and had no commission to wage war with any of its inhabitants.

The Israelites therefore sent ambassadors to Sihon, the king of the Amorites, whose metropolis was Heshbon, requesting permission to pass through his country in the same terms which they had previously employed in making a similar application to the king of Edom. Remembering that the Amorites were Canaanites, and closely connected with the tribes on the other side the river, and considering the very serious objections they might entertain to the settlement of the Israelites in their neighbourhood, it is not surprising that Sihon not only refused to permit them to pass through his country, but actually advanced with his forces to prevent them from crossing the Arnon. Having obtained the permission of their Divine King to meet the Amorites in battle, with the assured promise of victory, the new race of Hebrews advanced courageously to their first essay of arms. The two armies met near Jahaz. The alacrity which the Israelites exhibited in meeting them half way considerably damped the valour of the Amorites. Their ranks were broken at the first onset, and they fled to seek the shelter of their towns. But the greater part were slain in the pursuit, in which the Hebrews had great advantage; for not only were they, from their life in the desert, active and hardy in their frames, but lightly armed and skilled in the use of missile weapons, the sling, the dart, and the bow. The king himself was slain; and the Israelites took possession, by right of conquest, of his dominion, which comprised that fine territory which extends between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok. This country, having the Jordan on the west, was thus bounded by three fine streams, and not only possessed a fertile soil and rich pastures, but was already well settled, containing towns and villages and cultivated lands *.

This acquisition, however, brought the Israelites close to the southern frontier of the kingdom of Bashan, which reached to the river Jabbok. Og, the king of this country, was of the race of the old Rephaim, who inhabited the same country in the time of Abraham. To give some idea of his bulk and stature, the historian informs that his bedstead was of iron, and measured four yards and a half long, by two yards wide †. This monarch is described by Josephus as a friend and ally of Sihon, and had been marching to his assistance; when, finding that he was already defeated and slain, he determined to avenge him and to expel the intruders. But, in attempting to execute this intention, he was himself slain in battle with the Hebrews, and all his army destroyed. Moses then crossed the Jabbok and overran the country, taking possession of the sixty walled towns which it contained.

* See Josephus, iv. 5. 1, 2.

† "Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man." (Deut. iii. 11.) But as a bedstead is larger than the man for whose use it is intended, Og's stature was doubtless less—perhaps about nine feet.

Thus the Israelites were led into the occupation of a rich and beautiful country which they had not designed or expected to obtain, extending from the river Arnon to the roots of Anti-Lebanon.

With the Ammonites the Israelites did not interfere, although they lay close, on the east, to their new dominions. For this there were two reasons,—that they had been forbidden to disturb the children of Lot, and that the frontier of the Ammonites was very strong.

The Moabites were doubtless well pleased to witness the overthrow of their old enemies and conquerors, the Amorites. But this was all of satisfaction they could find in the late events. They considered that they had a fair claim to the lands occupied by the Amorites, stronger than that which the Hebrews derived from their recent conquest; and it was by no means a satisfaction to them to see thus suddenly established in their neighbourhood a power which combined the authority and resources which had previously been divided between two states, either of which had been singly a sufficient, or more than sufficient, match for themselves. They could not but apprehend danger from such neighbourhood, not probably being aware that the Israelites had been forbidden to disturb the children of Lot in the territory which they actually occupied. But the Moabites had sufficiently profited by the overthrow of Sihon and Og to be aware that they could not, in their own resources, risk any hostile movement against the Hebrews. Balak, the king of Moab, therefore sought to strengthen himself by the assistance of such of the widely-dispersed tribes of Midian (descended from the son of Abraham by Keturah) as were then pasturing their flocks in the eastern plains. The emirs of Midian readily yielded their assistance (doubtless allured by the prospect of rich spoil). And they, who had been accustomed to wander far, with their flocks, and herds, and in commercial caravans, which bare to Syria and to Egypt the rich productions of the remoter East, told Balak of a famous prophet or diviner, Balaam by name, who dwelt beyond the Euphrates. This man saw far into the future, and his words were of such power, that whatsoever he cursed was certainly accursed, and whatsoever he blessed was blessed indeed. They therefore concluded that before they committed themselves by any hostile acts, it would be best to send for this wondrous man, that he might lay the heavy burden of his curse upon the host of Israel. The expediency of this course was probably suggested by the appearance of a religious character in the march and encampment of the Israelites, with their splendid tabernacle and ritual service, and with the evident proofs which were offered, that they were under the special care and direction of some supernatural power. Hence they judged it useless to act against this favoured people, until the supernatural blessing under which they prospered were neutralised by the supernatural power of a curse from the Mesopotamian prophet.

Persons of consideration were sent from both parties, with suitable presents, to fetch Balaam from Mesopotamia. They were well received by the prophet, whom we take to have been not an idolatrous diviner, but an ill-disposed prophet of the true God—such as we know there were in later times. He promised to give the messengers an answer in the morning, and when the morning came he told them he could not go, for the people whom he was desired to curse were blessed of God.

The king of Moab and the emirs of Midian

[Egyptian Asses, saddled (Ancient).]

were but little satisfied with this answer. They sent again by personages of higher rank than before and more in number to renew the request in more urgent terms, and with the promise of great wealth and high honours for his reward. Balaam, who greatly desired to go, that he might reap all the benefits offered to him, was reluctant to act at once on his former instructions, and repeat his refusal; but hoping to receive permission, desired the messengers to await an answer till the morning. In the night he was told he might go if the messengers positively insisted on his going with them; but, in that case, he was, on his arrival, to act as he should be then instructed. The overjoyed prophet got up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, on which animal men of holy callings in the East still affect to ride*. He then called the messengers, and told them that he was at liberty to go with them, but could still only act according to the instructions he might receive.

This over-readiness of the prophet, from the desire of gain, to avail himself of the conditional leave he had obtained, while he knew that he could only satisfy the king by cursing those whom the Lord had blessed, was deeply displeasing to God. As he rode along, his ass suddenly refused to proceed; and when, with redoubled blows, he endeavoured to urge him on, a human voice was given to the animal to complain of the treatment it received. In the anger of the moment the prophet was heedless of the miracle, and returned a passionate answer; when suddenly his eyes were opened to behold "things invisible to mortal sight," and he saw the cause of his beast's refractoriness, —an angel of God stood in the way, with a drawn sword to intercept his path. He was now apprised of the Divine displeasure at his conduct, and was told that he had been struck dead unless his ass, seeing the angel, had refused to proceed. On this Balaam humbled himself, and expressed his readiness to return home if so commanded. But he was told he might go on; but was enjoined to act in future precisely as he should be directed. Indeed, it is manifest that this adventure on the road was intended to teach him the necessity of strict and literal obedience to his orders, however distasteful they might be to him. This suggests an adequate cause for what has seemed to some a preposterous and needless incident.

At the end of his journey his arrival was hailed with great joy by the princes of Moab and Midian; but this was somewhat checked by his telling them that he could act but as the involuntary organ of a higher power, whose behests he could not gainsay.

The prophet was however taken by the king to the summit of a mountain, from which he could command a view of the Hebrew encampment, laid out before him in all its order and beauty, with the splendid tabernacle of JEHOVAH standing apart in the central square, in the place usually occupied by the tent of the emir or the king. He was much impressed by the sight; and when the spirit of prophecy came upon him, he cried,—

> "How can I curse whom God hath not cursed?
> How can I execrate whom Jehovah hath not execrated?"

and then proceeded to "bless them altogether." The king was deeply mortified at this result; and he successively took Balaam to different points, from which views might be commanded of different portions of the Israelite camp, in the hope that although the prophet might not be allowed to curse the whole, there was some portion on which the weight of his ban might be laid. But on all these occasions, Balaam was compelled to break forth into blessings, and into prophecies of the future glories and victories of Israel. He alluded, not obscurely, to the triumphs of David, in the king who was to extend the power of Israel over the neighbouring state, the respective dooms of which, in being ultimately brought under the Hebrew sceptre, he clearly foretold. Even Moab was not excepted. All these prophecies and blessings were delivered with as much force and power of poetic expression as can be found in any of the later prophets; and this it may be

* The saddles of asses, so often mentioned in Scripture, were, doubtless, such as our cut exhibits. They are merely mats or quilted cloths, similar to those still in use, although now a kind of pad is often used.

important to note, as showing that the spirit of inspiration wrought as powerfully in the most unwilling as in the most willing instruments. There is much interest to us in the expressions of admiration which the view of the Hebrew encampment extorts from a person so experienced in camps as Balaam; and beholding it from the vantage ground on which his impressions place us, we have a more distinct notion of its beautiful order than we could otherwise realize. At the first view, he cried,—

"When, from the tops of the rocks, I see them,
And from the lofty hills I behold them;—
Lo! they are a people that shall dwell alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
Who shall count the dust-like seed of Jacob?
Who shall number the multitude of Israel?"

Again, the second time,—

"Behold! I have received a command to bless,—
For God hath blessed, and I cannot revoke it.
I behold no trouble in Jacob,
Nor do I see distress in Israel.
Jehovah their God is with them,
And to him they shout as their king."

And another time, we are expressly told that it was when he saw "Israel encamped according to their tribes" that he exclaimed,—

"How beautiful are thy tents, O Jacob!
And thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As vales planted with groves*;
Like gardens by the side of a river;
Like lign-aloes planted by Jehovah;
As cedars by water streams."

In the end, Balak would have been very willing that Balaam should "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all," and was unutterably humbled that his design had been so strangely and entirely reversed. Balaam himself was, no doubt, quite as much disappointed, as he was obliged to depart without the rewards and honours by which he had been tempted. As we afterwards find him among the Midianites, it would seem that instead of returning home he went no farther than from the Moabites to them; or else that he went home and afterwards returned. But, either before his set out or after his return, he gave the pernicious and fatal advice, that the only way to weaken the Israelites and bring them into trouble would be by drawing them aside to the worship of the native gods; for then their own God would be provoked, and would withdraw His protection from them, in which case they might easily be vanquished. And he suggested that the beauty of the native women might well be made the instrument of this seduction.

The chiefs of Moab and Midian spared nothing to carry this most pernicious council into effect. A seemingly amicable intercourse was opened with the Israelites, by means of which the most beautiful females of the two nations were purposely brought under the notice of the ardent and undisciplined youth of the Hebrew cause. They fell into the snare thus cunningly laid for them. Great numbers of them yielded up their souls to their fair enslavers; and, rather than be separated from them, refused the observance of those peculiar laws which rendered a free and equal intercourse with strangers and idolaters impossible. These barriers being overleaped, there was but a step to a participation in the idolatrous services of the gods worshipped in those parts. Indeed, as the chief of those gods was the obscene Baalpeor, it is far more than likely that the intercourse between the Hebrews and these "fair idolatresses" was in itself made to seem an act of idolatrous service. Certain it is, that the people allowed themselves to be drawn to worship the gods of Moab, and eat of their sacrifices; and many of them were not ashamed to wear openly the obscene badges of Baalpeor.

Any long continuance of this state of affairs would have involved nothing less than the complete overthrow of the whole system of religion, government, and morals, which had been established with so much pains and difficulty; and now, at the moment for action, would have compelled the abandonment of all the high objects which had so long been kept before the view of the nation. The severest measures of correction were hence necessary. God therefore sent

* This and most of the other images, obviously allude to the parallel lines of tents, forming streets, or roads, like vales.

a most destructive plague among them; and besides this, Moses was commanded to order the judges to slay all the men, in the several divisions over which they presided, who were seen wearing the badges of Baalpeor. This was done; but the plague went raging on, and the camp was full of lamentation, when the prince of a chief house in the tribe of Simeon, Zimri by name, was seen openly conducting Cozbi, the daughter of one of the Midiantish emirs, to his tent. This cool proceeding, at such a time of calamity, roused the indignation of Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, and son of the present high priest, Eleazar; and, acting on the burning impulse of the moment, he took a spear and followed the parties to the tent, and there slew them both at one thrust. This act, under peculiar circumstances, which would prevent it from being adduced as a precedent, was accepted by God as one of atonement, for instantly the plague ceased. The number who perished on this occasion was 24,000*.

As the Midianites had been more active than the Moabites in this affair—perhaps because their semi-nomade habits enabled themselves and their females to associate more freely with the Israelites than was possible to a more settled people like the Moabites—Moses was commanded to denounce war against them. As this war was only against the adjoining tribes who had been immediately engaged in this disgraceful and insidious policy, a draft of 12,000 picked men, 1000 from each tribe, was judged sufficient. Against these Midianites the war was declared to be one of extermination, on the same principle as that which in modern times adjudges death to the foreigners who excite a people to rebellion against their rightful king. Here, as in many other cases, transactions in the early Hebrew history are liable to be misunderstood whenever we allow ourselves to forget that Jehovah was really and practically the King of the Hebrew people.

This small army, without the loss of a single man, took ample vengeance on the Midianites. The Israelites descended like a storm upon the country, carrying fire and sword wherever they went. The towns and strongholds were destroyed, and every man who fell into their hands was put to the sword. Among these were five emirs,—the chiefs, probably, of as many tribes or clans; and with them Balaam the prophet reaped the wages of his iniquity. They saved all the women and children, and finally returned to the camp with an immense booty, consisting of 675,000 sheep, 70,000 beeves, and 60,000 asses, besides upwards of 8000 ounces of gold, in various ornaments of that metal, such as chains, bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and

[Ear-rings of Men.]

some uncertain ornament which appears to have been worn upon the breast. From this account of the spoil, the Midianites appear to have been a wealthy semi-pastoral people, and (as the ornaments seem to be those of the men) studious of splendour in their attire. Ear-rings do not appear to have been worn by men among many of the more civilized nations of antiquity, not, for instance, by the Egyptians; but among the sculptured antiquities of that people several foreign nations are represented with this ornament, as shown in the engraving above.

When the victors returned with their captives and spoil, Moses was very wroth that the women had been spared, seeing that they had been the exciting cause of the recent ca-

* St. Paul says (1 Cor. x. 8) that "twenty-*three* thousand persons died by the plague;" and, as the original number is 24,000, it has been reasonably conjectured that this is the full number, but that 1000 were slain by the judges, and the rest by the plague.

lamities and sins. He therefore commanded that all of them should be slain excepting the young virgins, who were to be kept as domestic slaves. All the male children he also ordered to be put to death. Infidelity has made a stand upon this conduct of Moses, as equally unjust and cruel. It may be answered that, when not acting under the Divine orders—and there is no mention of any command of God on this occasion—Moses was but a man, and liable as such to errors in policy and feeling, from passion or prejudice. The destruction of the very guilty women might be vindicated by such considerations of justice with respect to the past and of policy with reference to the future, as, we suspect, would have caused little hesitation in any of the chiefs of ancient nations, who rarely allowed any considerations to interfere with their views of policy; but the slaughter of the unoffending male children is very difficult to justify, and no satisfactory reason appears why they might not have been put on the same footing with the female children. As the Hebrew word rendered "children" comprehends grown youths as well as infants, —in short, all under twenty years of age,— it is no doubt true that the mass of these were old enough to have received the taint of paternal corruption, and to have remembered with vengeful hearts the fate of their fathers, mothers, and sisters; and these considerations, doubtless, had their weight with Moses as well as the force of the terrible example which this massacre would offer. Even to this case, therefore, the following sensible observations of Jahn will, in some degree, apply, while they bear generally on those seeming severities of the Hebrew system of war, which we shall have frequent occasion to notice and explain:—

"Anciently war was characterised by deeds of ferocity and cruelty. The Hebrews have, therefore, a claim to our forgiveness, if, in some instances, they resorted to those cruel measures, which were universally prevalent in their day, in order to strike terror upon other nations, to deter them from committing injuries upon themselves, and to secure their own tranquillity. There are some things, however, in their history which cannot be approved*. Still, as was said above, their severity in all instances cannot be condemned; for it is permitted by the natural law of nations, to a people, to inflict as many and as great evils upon an enemy as shall be sufficient to deter others from committing the like offence. The prevalent state of feeling among nations, whether it tend to kindness or cruelty, will determine how much is necessary to secure such an object. Nations anciently could not exhibit that humanity and forbearance in war which are common among modern European nations, without leaving themselves exposed to every sort of injury†. The general character of Hebrew warfare was comparatively mild and humane."‡ That this statement is true we shall ourselves be able, as occasion offers, to show, by adducing illustrations from the war usages of the ancient Egyptians, of whose "civilization" so high an opinion is now entertained; as well as from the existing usages of eastern nations. Several of the general usages of Hebrew warfare were brought into operation on this occasion, and may well be noticed in this place.

It will be observed that all the males were trained to the use of arms—or rather, were understood to be able to use arms; for, as now in eastern countries, every one probably acquainted himself with the use of arms for the purpose of self-defence. This is natural in a crude state of society, in which every one has cause to consider it probable that he shall be in circumstances to act hostilely or defensively against others. All the men capable of bearing arms were enrolled in the public registers, by the *genealogists* (*shoterim*), under the direction of the princes of the several tribes. In case of war, those who were to be called into actual service were taken from such as were thus enrolled, the whole body not being expected to take the field except on extraordinary occasions. In immediate prospect of war, the levy was made by the *genealogists*§.

* Judg. viii. 4—21. xx. i. *et seq.*; 2 Kings xv. 16; 2 Chron. xxv. 12.

† Num. xxxi. 14. *et seq.*; 2 Sam. ii. 31; comp. 2 Sam. x 1—5. xi. 1; Amos i. 13; 2 Sam. viii. 8. 7; comp. 2 Kings iii. 27; Amos ii. 1.

‡ 2 Sam. viii. 2; 1 Kings xx. 30—43; 2 Kings vi. 21—23; 2 Chron. xxviii. 8.

§ Deut. xx. 5—9.

As might be expected in a theocracy, priests were appointed to go with the army, in some sort, as ministers of the Divine King. Their presence was considered a sanction to the undertakings, which, in consequence, they had doubtless considerable share in controlling. It was, however, their principal duty to direct the attention of the army to the Invisible King as their actual Leader, who in a just cause would surely give them the victory, and to whom the glory of that victory should be ascribed. It was therefore they who gave the signal of attack by blowing the silver trumpets, and they who addressed the men before the action. The words they employed were:— "Hear, O Israel! Ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies. Let not your hearts faint: fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them. For JEHOVAH your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."* In later times, however, generals and kings relieved the priests from the duty of addressing the troops. On the present occasion, Phineas, the son of the high-priest, was he who went with the army; and the Jewish writers inform us that the priest, or rather, we suppose, the chief of the priests who went with the army, was considered as representing the high-priest and was in fact the high-priest for the purposes of the war; and that for this purpose he previously underwent the ceremony of anointing, from which he is called "the Anointed for the War." All this is very likely, except the anointing, of which we have considerable doubt.

The manner in which the spoil taken from the Midianites was divided, was probably not new, or peculiar to the Hebrews; but offers a valuable illustration of ancient usages on this subject. As the troops were regarded as citizens, engaged in a cause in which they had a personal interest, they received no wages or even subsistence while engaged in service. Hence it was considered but just that they should look to the spoils of the enemy as the reward of their toils and dangers. To encourage individual prowess, a warrior was entitled to appropriate to himself whatever spoils he might personally win: hence, in the present case, the articles of gold, &c., were considered the property of the soldiers; and as such they made a free offering of it as an oblation to their Divine King†. But the living prey, whether of cattle or men, were subject to an equal division,—that is, the flocks and captives were placed together and numbered. They were then divided into two parts, one of which was given to the great body of the men fit for war who had remained at home, subject to a deduction of one-fiftieth part for the Levites; the other half belonged to the smaller body who had been actually engaged, subject only to the deduction of a five-hundredth part for the priests. It appears that, in order to render the division more equal, the flocks, cattle, and captives were all publicly sold, and the money which they produced was divided in these proportions.

It also appears, from the example offered on this occasion, that when the army returned home, and before it was disbanded, the officers took an account of the men under their charge, and reported to the chief magistrate the number that were missing.

Some of the Hebrew tribes had more abundant possessions of flocks and herds than others. Among these were those of Reuben and Gad. These tribes observed that the land conquered from Sihon and Og abounded in rich pastures (which is true even to this day), and doubting that they could be better provided for anywhere else; they saw also that this country offered them the advantage of sending out their flocks into the open deserts on the east and south-east, which might not be easily realized in a country shut up between the river and the sea. They therefore applied to Moses, desiring to have this land assigned them for their inheritance; in consideration of which they were willing to relinquish their claim to a possession in the land of Canaan. Moses at first thought that they were disposed to seek their rest too soon in a land which all the tribes had helped to conquer. But when he understood that they were quite

* Deut. xx. 2–4.

† Num. xxxi. 50.

willing that all the men but such as it might be necessary to leave for the protection of their families and property, should go over Jordan with the other tribes, to assist them in their wars, he very much approved of their proposal, and agreed to their request. But as this territory seemed disproportionately large for two tribes only, he included half the tribe of Manasseh in the grant. Reuben had the southern part, which the Amorites had taken from Moab, and re-established Heshbon, which had been the capital of Sihon; Gad got the central part, which the Amorites had formerly conquered from the Ammonites, including more than a half of the land of Gilead; and the half-tribe of Manasseh received the northernmost portion, comprehending the rest of Gilead with the territories of Og, king of Bashan, of which the chief towns were Ashtaroth and Edrei.

And now, towards the end of the forty years, during which the Israelites had been, for their sins, kept back from their promised heritage, it was deemed advisable that a new registration of the people might be taken, and a comparison made with the census which had been taken, in the first year, in Sinai. It might thus be made evident, on the face of the record, that the Divine judgment had been accomplished in the appointed time, in consequence of which the existing race were in a condition to enter the Promised Land. It was also of some importance on other grounds that this enumeration should be made before the people entered upon those cruel wars in which they were about to engage. The results of this inquiry and comparison showed that of that evil generation which was above twenty years of age on leaving Egypt, only two persons, besides Moses, remained alive; and these two, Caleb and Joshua, were the very persons, who, on account of their deservings, had been by name excepted from the general doom. Nothing could be better calculated than this, on the one hand, to encourage the existing race, by assuring them that they were the special objects of the Divine notice and providence; and, on the other, to humble them, by bringing home to every family and to every individual the conviction of the certainty of those judgments which were declared against misdoers.

It appeared also that the population, notwithstanding the great and rapid change of its materials, was but little altered in its amount. The resulting difference was but 1820—being the amount of the *decrease* as compared with the former census; but of the tribe of Levi, which had received an *increase* of 727, the difference is reduced to little more than 1000. But although the whole numbers were so singularly near each other, there was a great and remarkable difference in the details. This will be best shown by the following comparative table, which we transcribe from 'The Pictorial Bible':—

	First Year.	Last Year.	Increase.	Decrease.
Reuben	46,500	43,730	——	2,770
Simeon	59,300	22,200	——	37,100
Gad	45,650	40,500	——	5,150
Judah	74,600	76,500	1,900	——
Issachar	54,400	64,300	9,900	——
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	3,100	——
Ephraim	40,500	32,500	——	8,000
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	20,500	——
Benjamin	35,400	45,600	10,200	——
Dan	62,700	64,400	1,700	——
Asher	41,500	53,400	11,900	——
Naphtali	53,400	45,400	——	8,000
	603,550	601,730	59,200	61,020
			Decrease on the whole	1,820
Levites, from a month old	22,273	23,000	727	——

The result of this forty years' wandering in the desert, and of that expurgation, which in its effect left but two men who were above sixty years of age, must have presented a body of men, who, physically and morally speaking, were singularly calculated for the great and arduous enterprises which lay before them.

The forty years were now well-nigh closed, and all things were ready for the advance into the Promised Land. Moses therefore knew the day of his death could not be distant, for he had been warned that it was not his privilege to lead the people who had so long engaged his care into their inheritance; but only to behold it afar off. Indeed, his years had already been protracted to the utmost span to which man's life then reached; but although not less than 120 years old, his eye was not yet dim nor his natural strength abated. The last acts of this able and good man we shall describe in the words of Professor Jahn, whose statements it is always a pleasure to be able to introduce:—

"Moses, having directed the Hebrews thus far during his life, wished to do all in his power to preserve the knowledge and worship of JEHOVAH among them after his death. The people, and even the magistrates, during the forty years of his administration, were far from being thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the theocracy which he had established. They had so often rebelled, and offered sacrifice to idols, that it became necessary to have all animals slain at the altar, and under the inspection of the priests. In their journeyings through the wilderness, they had carried with them portable shrines of Egyptian idols*; and it was but a short time since they had been guilty of the grossest idolatry†. It was evidently necessary that religion should be made to them, as much as possible, an object of sense; that it should be so closely interwoven with the civil institution that it could be neither forgotten nor perverted; and it was particularly desirable that the new generation should be made to perceive the nature of their polity, and the relation in which they stood to the true God.

"Moses accordingly wrote for the people an earnest exhortation to obedience, in which he alluded to the instances of the kindness, severity, and providence of God, which the Hebrews had already experienced; he exhibited in a strong light the sanctions of the law; he repeated the most important statutes, and added a few new ones to the code. These exhortations (which compose his fifth book, or Deuteronomy) he delivered to the magistrates as his farewell address, at a time when their minds were well prepared to receive wholesome instruction by the accomplishment of the Divine promises which had already commenced. The genealogists, each in his own circle, communicated all to the people, including the women and the children‡.

"That the latest generations might have a visible and permanent memorial of their duty, he directed that, after they had taken possession of Canaan, the law (or at least its fundamental principles, and the first development of its sanctions, as exhibited in Exod. xx.—xxiv.) should be engraved on pillars of stone, plastered with lime, and that these pillars should be erected with appropriate solemnity at Shechem on Mount Ebal, or, more probably, Mount Gerizim. On this occasion the priests were to utter particular imprecations against all the secret transgressors of the law, to which the people were to assent by responding '*Amen!*' at the end of each imprecation§.

"Moses then developed a second time, and still more minutely than before, the conditions on which JEHOVAH, their God and king, would govern them. He cast a prophetic glance into the most distant futurity, while he declared the different destinies which awaited them to the latest generations, according to their conduct in regard to the law. In full view of these conditions, and in order to impress them the more deeply on their minds, he caused the whole people, even the women and children, again to take a solemn oath of obedience; and

* In the original "portable tabernacles of Saturn."

† Amos v. 26; Acts vii. 23; Num. xxv. 1—9.

‡ Deut. xxix. 20.

§ Deut. xxxvii. 2—26.

that, not only for themselves, but also for their posterity*.

"The official duties of Moses were now closed. He commissioned Joshua, not as his successor, but as a military leader divinely appointed, to be the conqueror of the land of Canaan, and to portion it out among the victors. He delivered to the priests the whole book of the law, that they might deposit it in the sanctuary with the ark of the covenant. He also left them a song, in which he represented in the most vivid manner the perverseness of the nation, their future disobedience and punishment, repentance and pardon. This song the Hebrews were to commit to memory, that they might be aware of the consequences of disobedience, and that, when the threatenings were fulfilled, they might think of the law and return to their duty. Finally, he viewed the land of Canaan from Nebo, the summit of Mount Pisgah; and then this great man, and distinguished servant of God, was gathered to his fathers†.

"By the institutions which he introduced, for the preservation of the knowledge of God, he was the means of conferring an invaluable favour, not only on the Hebrews, but on the whole human race; a favour for which no wise or good man can withhold from him his gratitude, whatever objections he may imagine can be brought against some of his laws."

* Deut. xxviii. 1—68, xxix. xxx.

† Deut. xxxi.—xxxiv.

BOOK III.

JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEST.

After the death of Moses the Israelites remained encamped in the plains of Moab, with the river Jordan before them, prepared for, and expecting, the order for their advance into the land promised to their fathers.

This pause on the borders of that land affords us a very suitable opportunity of considering the grave questions—What claim had the Hebrews to the land they were about to invade with the intention to retain it for their own use?—what right had they to declare a war of utter extermination against nations who had never given them any cause of offence?

The answer which is now much relied upon is that of Michaelis, and, more lately, of Jahn. This answer alleges, that the Canaanites had appropriated to their own use the pasture-grounds occupied by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and expelled from their possessions those Hebrews who had occasionally visited Palestine during their residence in Egypt; and now the Israelites were about to recover, sword in hand, the lands, wells, and cisterns which the Canaanites had usurped. This is very ingenious, particularly in the attempt to show that the Israelites had, during their residence in Egypt, endeavoured to keep possession of the pasture-grounds in Canaan. But, from the passage referred to in proof of this*, it does not seem to us easy to gather this information; and the whole statement seems to us so hollow and insubstantial, that, in the persuasion our readers will at once see it to be so, we shall spare the room which its refutation would occupy, and merely observe that no such claim, if substantiated, would

* 1 Chron. vii. 20—29.

justify the avowed intention to exterminate the *original* inhabitants of the land,—who were there before Abraham came from beyond the Euphrates; and that the Hebrews themselves exhibit no anxiety about these pasture-grounds, of which so much is said; but tell us plainly that, intending to become an agricultural people, they wanted the cultivated lands, the fields, the vineyards, the towns of the Canaanites. Besides, those who were most in want of pasture-grounds had already secured them on the other side Jordan.

Dr. Hales takes still higher ground, which once seemed to us more stable than we are now inclined to regard it. He relies much upon an Armenian tradition recorded by Abulfaragi. This tradition states that Noah, before his death, divided the whole earth among his sons; and Dr. Hales thinks he can find allusions to such a partition in such passages as those referred to below*. According to this account, the land of Canaan was in the portion assigned to Shem; but we find it in the actual occupation of tribes descended from Ham; and from this it is argued that the Hebrews, as being descended from Shem, had a prior claim to the land, and were therefore perfectly justified in taking it, if in their power, from the nations by which it had been usurped.

Now, however desirable it might be to find some such ground to stand upon, we fear that it will not be found possible, on close inspection, to stand with confidence on this. In the first place, it does not seem likely that Noah knew much of the world, or concerned himself about dividing the earth among his sons, when, as yet, his descendants were few in number, and remained in their original tents. Besides, an unsupported Armenian tradition is a very precarious authority to rest upon; and it is hard to find what support it receives from the Scriptural texts which have been adduced. And, if this original partition might be relied on, the Hebrews would have derived no particular claim to the land of Canaan from it,—that is, no better claim than any other of the many races descended from Shem might have produced. Taking all these things into account, together with the distance of time since the supposed assignment of the land, we may very safely conclude that no such claim was made by the Hebrews or apprehended by the Canaanites.

The want of solidity in both these explanations rather damages than assists the question they were intended to elucidate.

In this transaction there were, so to speak, two parties, God and the Hebrews. It occurs to us that a clearer view of it may be obtained if we consider,—first, the conduct of the Jews apart from their position as a peculiar people acting under the special directions of God; then to view the proceedings of God, apart from any connection with the Hebrews; and, lastly, show how the interests and objects of both parties concurred in the same course of proceeding.

We may then, for the moment, view the Hebrews as an army of oppressed people, escaped from Egypt, and seeking a country in which they might settle down as an agricultural nation; and whose leaders had it in view to keep up among them a particular system of religion and law, through which only the people could be prosperous and happy, and through which only one peculiar and grand object which they had in view could be accomplished.

This being their object, the direction which they did take was the only practicable one in which such a country as they sought could be found. The Nile and the Lybian deserts beyond cut off their retreat westward, as the Mediterranean did on the north, and a southern route would only have involved them deeper in the Egyptian territory. Now in this direction, which was the only one the liberated nation could take, Canaan was the only country which suited their purpose. The Arabian deserts were of course not suited to become the permanent residence of a settled people; and, consequently, during the forty years which they spent in those deserts, they were compelled to remain a nomade people, and to sustain the hardships and privations incident to that mode of life. The country of Seir, although, as being mountainous, desirable from its capabilities of defence, was not suited either for agri-

* Deut. xxxii. 7—9; Acts. xvii. 26.

culture or pasturage, and was, besides, in the occupation of a nation closely related to themselves, and whom they had no desire to molest. The country east of the Jordan was less suitable for agriculture than pasturage, and it was too open, and wanted those natural borders and defences which were essential to a people destined to live apart among the nations. Part of it they did however take possession of for pastoral uses; but the remainder was in the occupation of the descendants of Lot, with whom the Hebrews had no desire to interfere.

The land of Canaan was in every way most suitable for them. The mountains and the sea, by which it was in every part inclosed, rendered it easy of defence against all invasion. It abounded in corn, oil, and fruits—in all productions and capabilities essential to settled life. Besides, this was the land which attached to itself all the memories capable of exciting the enthusiasm of such a people as the Hebrews. It was the cradle of their race. It was their historical land—the land in which their renowned forefathers fed their flocks for more than 200 years, and which was still the country of their fathers' sepulchres.

Such considerations would direct their attention to Canaan rather than to any other of the neighbouring countries. And, their attention being directed to it, let us consider first the Hebrews in their simple character, as ancient Asiatics who had no country, and felt that they must obtain one, and whom we would not expect to take any other course than other ancient Asiatics would take in similar circumstances. Now in those times the doctrines of international law and of the balance of power were certainly in a very crude condition. If we were not very anxious to confine our statement within the narrowest possible limits, we could accumulate instances to show that long after this date no nation was considered entitled to hold its territories by any other right than that of being able to defend them. If one people desired the lands of another, the practical law was, "You have a right to our lands if you can take them; but if you cannot we have the better right. You have a right to try, and we have a right to resist! Let success determine the right." Nor was such a law so injurious as it would be *now*. In the first place, the actual occupants had such advantages of defence as would suffice to protect them from merely vexatious aggressions; and, as then, for the most part, nations were divided into small independent princedoms, few great monarchies having been formed, the obstacles among them to a combination for any common object were so great, that established nations had little reason to fear invasion from any overwhelming force.

Under this system we are convinced that no one questioned the right of the Israelites to *try* to get possession of Palestine—not even the nations against whom they acted. Let it also be borne in mind that the Canaanites were very far from being a defenceless set of people, whom the Israelites had nothing to do but to treat as they pleased. They were, for the most part, a numerous, brave, and warlike people, with fortresses and walled towns, with cavalry and chariots of war; and that, so far was it from being an unequal match, that all the natural advantages were on the side of the Canaanites; who had to encounter a not very highly disciplined multitude from the desert, encumbered with women, children, and flocks; and of whom not more than one-fourth were fit to take a part in warlike operations.

Thus much for the claim or right of the Israelites, if we place them on the same ground as that on which any other nation would at that time have stood in corresponding circumstances.

But the leaders of the invaders determined that the interests of the nation required that the prior inhabitants should be totally exterminated. We are not to inquire just now into the point of view in which such a resolution would be considered at the present day, seeing that the nation by which this resolution was formed was not a modern or a European people. The only question is, did policy require or recommend this course? For we may be sure of this, that, if any course were in ancient times judged advantageous to a nation, no considerations of humanity or abstract justice were allowed for

one instant to weigh against its execution. And we are not now considering the Jews in any other light than as an ancient Asiatic nation. Even at this day it is avowed, as a doctrine of international law, that one nation in its dealings with others is not bound to seek any interests but its own. In ancient times this doctrine was carried out to the full and broad extent, that a nation in its dealings with others had a perfect right to remove, even by the sword, every interest that interfered with its own.

Now the leader of the Hebrews, deeming the objects which we have indicated to be essential to the existence and well-being of the nation, was convinced that these objects could not be accomplished unless the Canaanites were entirely extirpated. He knew that the system which he sought to establish could not be upheld, but in a field clear for its operation. He knew that the unsettled conquerors of a settled people generally adopt the ideas and manners of the people they have overcome: and the manners and ideas of the Canaanites were not only so opposed to, and subversive of, those which he desired his people to retain, as to render the co-inhabitation of the land, by the two races, certain ruin to the people for whom he was bound to care,—but were in themselves so very evil as to render that extirpation which policy required an act of divine and moral justice. Again, it was certain that if the old conquered nations were allowed to remain inhabitants of the land, together with the conquerors, and that the land was able to sustain them both (which it certainly was not), they would cherish a very natural hatred against their conquerors, and such a desire of vengeance against them, as would render them watchful of all opportunities which might offer of rising against them, and that with all the advantage which might be derived from an intimate acquaintance with their numbers and resources. This, while it would keep the nation in a state of constant fretfulness and excitement, would prevent them from dispersing themselves abroad properly through the country, and of giving full and proper effect to the spirit of their institutions.

We are satisfied that, however unsatisfactory these reasons may now appear, they are such as would have determined any ancient Asiatic nation to the course which the Hebrews were commanded to take; and this, without these special reasons, operating in the case of the Hebrews, which we have purposely reserved.

Now, then, let us look to the part taken by God himself in this matter.

If we believe the Bible, we must believe that, anciently, it was a part of the Divine plan in the government of the world to visit guilty nations with sudden and overwhelming punishments, by which they were utterly destroyed. Let us think of the Deluge, and of the "cities of the plain." Now God constantly declares that the nations of Canaan were at this time as ripe for such a punishment as Sodom and Gomorrah had been. The patriarchs were repeatedly told by God that the Canaanites generally had not yet reached that point of wickedness as would make their extirpation necessary to prove the world to be subject to moral government: "their iniquity was not yet full." But it was full, as God foreknew that it would be, by the time the Hebrews arrived from Egypt; and then it pleased God to commission the sword of the Hebrews to execute his judgment upon the Canaanites, instead of giving that commission, as he had done in other cases, to the storm, the earthquake, the inundation, or the pestilence. Shall we then allow our minds to dwell so exclusively on the sentence of extermination, and be quite unmindful of the long-suffering of God, who withheld his judgments for centuries, till the measure of their iniquities was completed, and who, in the mean time, gave them repeated warnings, through which the doom which hung over them might have been averted?

Here, then, the policy of God and the supposed policy of the Hebrews meet; or rather the policy of God, as it respected both the Hebrews and the Canaanites, met in this one point—the extirpation of the latter. While the Jews required a vacant country, the justice of God required that a country should be vacated for them. The course which, in

cool abstract terms, would have been *good policy* for the Hebrews, but which would have been *savage conduct* in them,—that course was sanctioned, was made imperative, by the righteous and long-delayed judgment of God upon a guilty people. Their guilt has never been questioned. They had no public faith or honour, and consequently no treaties could be formed with them. Their morals were corrupt in the extreme. Incest was common; they practised fornication, and indulged unnatural lusts, *in honour of their gods*, upon whose altars human victims were also offered. There seems to have been a point beyond which the abominations of pagan idolatry were not allowed to proceed; and as the punishments which followed, when that limit was once passed, evinced that the gods which those nations so sedulously worshipped were unable to protect their adorers, they would thus, in their way, suggest that there was a power far above them? But after God had established his testimony in the world, first by the Mosaical, and afterwards by the Christian system, this mode of asserting his moral government appears to have been more rarely employed.

The Israelites, therefore, entered Canaan as the commissioned ministers of the Divine justice; and as such they were under a solemn obligation to take that course which was also most conducive to their own interests, but from which, if it had rested on that ground only, their humanity might have shrunk. It was, therefore, made an inviolable law to the Hebrews that they should enter into no connection with these people; that they should not make them tributary, nor even admit them as subjects or slaves; but should cut off unsparingly all who fell into their hands, and in this manner warn the others to flee from the land where JEHOVAH was king. The decree of extermination must be understood as implying that the Canaanites might leave the country in peace if they chose. It seems that many of them betook themselves to flight, and, embarking on board Phœnician vessels, sailed to Africa, and there planted colonies. All, or at least the greater part, might have taken this course to save their lives and treasures; and although we do not think that the Israelites could enter into treaty with them as idolaters, there is no reason to question but that, if they had chosen to renounce their idols, and to have remained in the country well disposed towards the Hebrews, they might, according to a proper construction of the Law, have been spared. We do not mean that the Hebrews wished to win converts by the sword. That they never did: nor, until their latter days, were they anxious to introduce strangers into their body. But if any nation had been convinced that the God of the Hebrews was the true and only God, in consequence of the wonders which he had wrought for them, and the victories he enabled them to achieve, and the impotence of their own gods before him, that nation would doubtless have been spared. But they seem rather to have chosen to abide the event of a war with the invaders.

We pray, then, again, that it may be distinctly understood that, in a conflict between men and men, there was no advantage on the side of the Hebrews, but rather the reverse. Their invasion was not an irruption of the strong against the weak; but an attempt to conquer, with equal arms, a well defended country, occupied by a numerous people of tried and well known valour. The Hebrews did not attempt to reduce the people of the Promised Land with smooth words, that they might oppress them afterwards; but openly avowed their intentions, and thereby exposed themselves to corresponding treatment from the enemy, should *they* prove successful. No objection can be made to the supernatural assistance afforded to the Hebrews by God, for in all these contests among ancient nations, the gods of the respective parties were understood to be deeply interested, and engaged to protect their worshippers, and to promote their views as far as they were able. And struck as the Canaanites were by the prodigies wrought by Jehovah, they looked to their gods for the same kind of assistance, and expected them to fight on their behalf against the God of the Hebrews. We have no right, therefore, to make a complaint for them which they did not make for themselves. They more probably, in the result of the

contest, quarrelled with their own gods for their impotence or insufficient assistance, than objected to the assistance which JEHOVAH rendered to his people. This was the war theology of the ancient nations; and we meet with it at every turn, not only in the Bible, but in all ancient history.

The particular consequences which resulted from the neglect or obedience of the Hebrews to their commission, are involved in the historical statements to which we now proceed.

It was now about "the time of barley harvest," that is, about the vernal equinox, when the river Jordan is swollen, and overflows its banks, from the melting of the snows on Anti-Lebanon, Hermon, and the mountains of Syria. Trusting to the obstacle which the river at this time offered, the Canaanites were under no apprehension of immediate attack, although they well knew by this time that the Israelites intended to advance into the country, nothing less than the conquest of which they contemplated. The interval does not appear to have been applied to any purpose of preparation by the inhabitants. The number of small states, among which the land was parcelled out, probably offered a serious obstacle to any extensive and formidable combination for a common object,—at least until the danger should become more immediately pressing. However, those Canaanites who inhabited that quarter of the country, in which the Hebrew host now appeared, were filled with consternation,—not so much on account of the Israelites themselves, it would seem, as on account of their God,—that great and terrible God who had wrought such unheard-of wonders for them. The passage of the Red Sea, of which they had heard long before, from various quarters — perhaps, among others, from the Egyptians—had, from its grandeur and important results, made a profound impression upon them. And when they saw the people, thus wonderfully delivered and helped, appear on their borders, many of the Canaanites despaired entirely that any long-continued or effectual stand could be made against them. Joshua learned all this by two spies whom he had secretly sent over the river, and who had got into the city of Jericho, where they had been concealed in the house of a woman named Rahab. From her they received this information; and she added: "As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for JEHOVAH, your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

At length the order came to pass the river. This order was delivered to Joshua, and was accompanied by a very solemn confirmation of his appointment as the chief destined to lead the chosen people to the conquest of the Promised Land. Success was assured to him:—"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life;"* but at the same time he was warned that this success depended upon his entire conformity to the form and spirit of the theocracy. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."† The authority of Joshua, who was at this time about eighty-four years of age, was recognised very cheerfully by the people; and indeed it may be said that his brilliant career was disturbed by none of those popular risings and discontents which had rendered the administration of Moses so laborious and difficult.

The overflowing Jordan was passed by a miracle analogous to that which occurred at the Red Sea. It took place on the tenth day of the first month, wanting only five days to complete forty years from the day the Israelites left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month.

On that day the ark of the covenant, by the divine direction, was borne by the priests before the body of the people on their march, about 2000 cubits, or 1000 yards. As soon as the feet of these priests touched the brim of the waters of the river, the waters immediately recoiled upwards, stood, as it were,

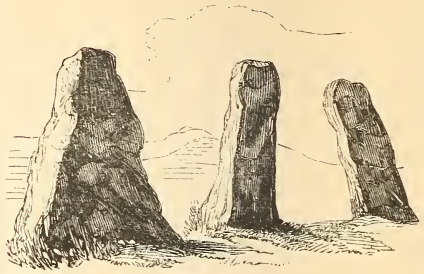
* Josh. i. 5. † Josh. i. 8.

in heaps, and went backwards a considerable way, while the lower waters pursued their course to the Dead Sea, leaving their channel dry. Then the priests bearing the ark entered the bed of the river, and stood still when they had reached the middle, while the people passed hastily below them, at the distance of 2000 cubits. The ark, with the priests standing, as it were, to protect them from the fear and danger of being overwhelmed by the incumbent mass of waters. As soon as the people had all passed over, then the priests also proceeded to the farther bank with the ark; and no sooner did the soles of their feet touch the dry land, than the suspended waters were loosened, and returned to their place, overflowing the banks as usual.

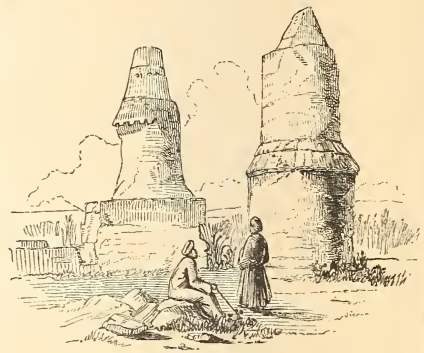
"The passage of this deep and rapid, though not wide, river," observes Dr. Hales, "at the most unfavourable season was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the Red Sea; because here was no natural agency whatever employed; no mighty wind to sweep a passage, as in the former case; no reflux of the tide, on which minute philosophers might fasten to depreciate the miracle. It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed to silence cavils respecting the former; and it was done at noon-day, in the face of the sun, and in the presence, we may be sure, of the neighbouring inhabitants, and struck terror into the kings of the Canaanites and Amorites westward of the river."

As an enduring record of this memorable event to the latest posterity, Joshua was commanded to erect two monuments, one in the bed of the river, before the waters returned, formed of twelve stones, one for each tribe, taken from the shore; and the other composed of the same number of stones, upon the bank, near Gilgal. The mention of these monuments, and others of the same kind elsewhere, suggests whether they may not have offered some analogy to the various remains called Druidical, which are now found in Syria and in all parts of the world.

The first encampment of the Israelites in the Land of Promise was at Gilgal, close by the monument they had thus erected, in the



[Stones of Memorial.]



[Monumental Pillars.]

plain of Jericho. Here, the day after the passage of the Jordan, the rite of circumcision, which had been intermitted since the departure from Egypt, was, by the Divine command, renewed; and the ceremony was performed on all the descendants of the generation that perished in the wilderness. They were then qualified to celebrate the passover, which also had been intermitted from the second time of its celebration at Sinai. The first passover in the land of their inheritance was accordingly celebrated on the fourteenth day of the same month. Some writers have censured the Israelites for not taking advantage of the panic of the Canaanites at the miraculous passage of the Jordan, but allowing them time to recover themselves, and prepare for war; but such objectors forget that these acts of obedience to the law formed, under their theocratical government, the best possible preparation

for the enterprise that lay before them. It would, in fact, be wrong to overlook the signal act of faith involved in their submission to the painful operation of circumcision in the face of their enemies, relying upon the divine protection till they were healed. This seems to intimate that the recent events had made a very salutary impression upon them.

As God never worked miracles that were unnecessary, or longer than they were necessary, the miraculous supply of manna, which had formed their chief subsistence for forty years, ceased the day after this third celebration of the passover; for they were now able to obtain a sufficient supply of man's ordinary food from the products of the land which they had now entered.

It was clear that their first military operations must be against Jericho—"the city of palm-trees,"—which appears to have been at that time one of the most important and strongest cities of Palestine. Joshua was accordingly surveying it one day, about this time; and, as the art of taking fortified places was then in its infancy, he was perhaps giving way to despondency at the apparently impregnable character of the place, when he suddenly saw before him a warrior with a drawn sword in his hand. The undaunted Hebrew challenged him, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" But on receiving the answer, "Nay; but as captain of Jehovah's host am I now come," accompanied by the same injunction which Moses had received from the burning bush in Horeb, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy," he became aware of the sacred character of the personage who appeared before him; and, humbling himself to the dust before him, he expressed his readiness to receive his commands. He was then instructed that the Lord had determined to strengthen the impression which had already been made upon the Canaanites, by causing the fall of Jericho before the Israelites, in such a manner as should demonstrate that One greater than the gods of Canaan fought for them.

According to these instructions, the whole host of Israel marched in solemn procession around the city, before the ark borne by the priests. From all that vast host not a sound was heard save the tramp of their innumerable feet, and the notes of the seven trumpets of rams' horns, which were sounded by as many priests attending the ark, and which must have drawn the attention of the wondering people, who thronged the walls of Jericho, to *that* as the principal object in the procession. This tour of the city was repeated, daily, for six days. But on the seventh day this circumambulation was repeated seven times; and when the seventh tour was completed, the silence which the Hebrews had hitherto observed was suddenly broken by one tremendous shout, which their united voices poured forth. At that sign the walls of Jericho fell level with the ground; and the triumphant, and now excited, host rushed from every side into the astonished city. Their first care was to place the hospitable Rahab and her family in a place of safety; and then the sword and fire were allowed to work their terrible mission without stint. Every creature that breathed in that city, of man or beast, was slain, and, after the prey, of metal only, had been collected, the place was set on fire, and levelled to the ground. In fact, the place had been devoted to total destruction by the vow of *cherem*, and was dealt with accordingly. And being thus an accursed, or devoted thing, Joshua, in the spirit of prophecy, denounced—what was held by the Jews the greatest of calamities—the loss of all his children, upon the person who should ever attempt to rebuild it. This happened accordingly to Hiel of Bethel, in the time of king Ahab*. In the case of a city devoted under this vow, nothing was preserved but the metal, and that was, as a consecrated thing, delivered into the sacred treasury. It is interesting to learn that, not only silver and gold, but "vessels of brass *and of iron*" were among the spoils of Jericho thus preserved and consecrated.

The miraculous overthrow of Jericho, and the terrible execution which had been inflicted on it, made upon the inhabitants of the land

* Compare Josh. vi. 26 with 1 Kings xvi. 34.

the profound impression which was intended. The fame of Joshua "was noised throughout all the country." But no combination was made against this formidable invasion. Considerable confidence might still be placed in those defences which, it must have seemed, the Israelites could not carry without the miraculous interposition of their God; and every city, or, which was nearly equivalent, every small state, was left to defend itself as it best could.

Joshua proved himself a man eminently qualified for the duties which devolved upon him. Considering that now his immense camp required to be supplied with food from the natural resources of the land, he deemed it advisable that it should remain in that fruitful plain where it then lay, making it, in short, his head-quarters, from which suitable detachments might, as occasion offered, be sent upon military service. As soon, therefore, as the proper arrangements had been made in the camp, Joshua sent some spies to bring him an account of the city of Ai, which lay about ten or twelve miles. These men thought so lightly of the place, that they advised him to send only a small force against it. He accordingly sent 3000 men. This force received from the men of Ai a most unexpected and discouraging repulse, with the loss of thirty-six men. This was a heavy blow, from the encouragement it was calculated to offer the Canaanites by teaching them that notwithstanding the protection of their mighty God, the Israelites were not absolutely invulnerable. Joshua was so sensible of this, that he applied to God (probably by *urim* and *thummim*) to learn the reason of this reverse, after the general promise of victory to the Hebrews. The answer was, that a sacrilege had been committed, by some of the devoted things of Jericho having been secreted, and that Israel could not prosper until the abomination was purged from out the camp. Joshua, therefore, took immediate measures for detecting the criminal, who, when taken by lot, proved to be one Achan, of the tribe of Judah. He confessed that from the spoils of Jericho he had secreted, for his own use, a handsome mantle of Babylonish manufacture, two hundred shekels of silver, and an ingot of gold, weighing fifty shekels, and that they remained hid in the earth within his tent. By this, Achan, according to the old laws and usages of devotement, had brought upon himself and all that belonged to him the terrible doom of *cherem* under which Jericho itself had perished. He, therefore, with all his family, his cattle, and his goods, together with the things by which his covetous heart had been tempted from a most sacred obligation, were taken to a valley outside the camp, where all that lived were stoned to death, and their bodies, together with the goods, consumed by fire; after which a large cairn, or mound of stones, was raised by the people over the ashes, as a monument of this awful execution to future times.

After this, Joshua in person undertook a new expedition against Ai. He took 30,000 men with him, and resorted to a stratagem which seems to have subsequently become a favourite one with the Israelites, as it was afterwards among other nations. He placed 25,000 of his men in ambush behind the city; and with the remaining 5000 advanced openly to the assault. The people of Ai, encouraged by their former success, went out to meet them; on which the Israelites retreated, and the people of Ai, thinking they fled before them, as on the former occasion, pursued them with considerable ardour. When the defenders of the city were thus withdrawn to a considerable distance, the larger body which had lain in ambush, rose, and entered the town without the least resistance. They set it on fire; and when the retreating Israelites beheld the signal of the ascending smoke and flames, they turned round upon their pursuers with such vigour, that they began to think of retreating to their strong city. But when they looked back and saw it in flames, they were filled with consternation, and still more, when they beheld the main body of the Israelites advance forth from the city against them. Thus hemmed in between two forces, the late pursuers were filled with consternation, and made but an impotent resistance. They were all destroyed, with the exception of the king, who was taken

alive. The united force then returned to Ai; and the fate of that town was even as the fate of Jericho had been. The number of the Canaanites that perished that day was 12,000, being, in fact, the whole population of the place. The captive king was slain, and his body hanged upon a tree till eventide, when, according to the Jewish law*, it was taken down. It was then buried in one of the gates of the town—or rather, a large heap of stones was raised over it there. No one can deny that this was a most revolting act. All that can be said in its justification, is involved in the considerations which we had occasion to state at the commencement of this chapter. To put him to death was a sacred duty to the Hebrews; and apart from that, of which we have already sufficiently treated, the *manner* of his death only is open to objection; and that, it will be observed, although ignominious, was by no means cruel. But, in fact, it were easy to show that even in wars which are not of an unusually savage character, or which were not wars of extermination, it was customary to take the chiefs prisoners if possible, for the purpose of subjecting them to a public execution, not merely to punish them, but to intimidate others by the terror of the example. History is full of this—the history of all nations. In the east the practice is not yet extinct; and the execution of the king of Ai will bear no comparison with the decapitation of Saoud, the Wahabee chief, at Constantinople, when we consider the distance of time and place, and the encouraging assurances which that unfortunate personage had received†. In this, then, it appears that the worst that can be said is, that the Hebrews were not superior to other nations of those and long subsequent times. And certainly we are not disposed to contend that they were superior in anything, and are willing to allow they were inferior in many things—*except in their religious system*—to the nations around them. These observations must be extended in their application to any incidents of a similar kind which may hereafter occur.

* Deut. xxi. 23.

† He was paraded over the city for three days before his execution.

This second victory at last roused the Canaanites from the stupor in which they had lain; and the too sure presentiment of the fate which awaited them, unless energetic measures were taken, led them to take measures for repairing the errors into which they had fallen at the first, by combining to resist the storm which threatened to desolate the land. A general league was therefore formed by the princes of the numerous small states of different races, by which the southern part of Palestine was occupied. The republic (for such it seems to have been) of Gibeon, was nearly in the centre of this coalition, and was composed of the city so called, with three others, in the occupation of a tribe of Hivites. As Gibeon was but eight miles south by west from Ai, it might fairly expect to receive the first brunt of the approaching war. The inhabitants were much alarmed at this prospect, and greatly doubted the result. They deemed it far better to allay than to defy the approaching storm. But they knew that the Hebrews would enter into no alliance with the inhabitants of the country. They therefore resorted to a very singular stratagem to achieve their object.

The ambassadors whom they sent to the Hebrew camp assumed the exhausted appearance and travel-worn attire of men who had arrived after a long journey, and presented themselves before Joshua as the envoys of a far-distant people, who, hearing, even in their remote seats, the wonders which God had wrought for his people, had sent the present messengers to congratulate them, and to seek the friendship and alliance of a nation so highly favoured. The suspicions which the people at first seemed disposed to entertain were lulled by the delicate and skilful flattery which the statement of the strangers involved; and all doubt was removed when the men appealed to their dry and mouldy bread, which they declared was hot from the oven when they left their homes; and to the rent skins which contained their wine; their worn and travel-stained clothes and sandals,—all of which they vowed to have been new when they commenced their journey. By this Joshua himself was deceived; and he made a peace

and alliance with them, confirmed by the oaths of "the princes of the congregation." The issue, however, impressed upon them the necessity of seeking the counsel of their divine King before they concluded such important engagements in time to come: for three days had not passed before they discovered that these pretended strangers, with whom they had formed this anomalous treaty, were their near neighbours the Gibeonites. However, out of regard to the oaths which had been taken, and notwithstanding the guile which had been practised, it was determined to exempt them from the general doom of the Canaanites; while, to punish their deceit, they were reduced to a kind of bondage, it being made obligatory upon them to supply a sufficient number of men to discharge the laborious offices of drawing water and hewing wood for the camp and the tabernacle. This afforded to the faithless Canaanites a memorable example of a regard for treaties, and for the sacred sanction of an oath; while the services imposed upon the Gibeonites rendered a most acceptable relief to the persons by whom those offices had hitherto been performed. This service of the Gibeonites became easier to them when the Israelites were settled and dispersed in the land of promise; for they had then no longer to hew wood and draw water for the whole camp, but only for the tabernacle, and for the temple afterwards.

This defection of the Gibeonites from the common cause greatly increased the embarrassments of the princes of southern Canaan, as the state of Gibeon seems to have been one of the most important of the several small states in that part of the country. Considering this in connection with the unrestrained progress which the Hebrews had hitherto made, the king of Jerusalem, by name Adoni-zedek, who seems to have been the head of the league which had been formed, saw that the time for action was fully come; and it was judged best to commence with the comparatively easy task of punishing the Gibeonites for their discouraging defection. Accordingly, this king, with four allied or tributary princes, laid siege to the important city of Gibeon. It seems that all the kings who joined Adoni-zedek on this occasion were Amorites, and that tribe or nation may be supposed to have been animated by more than the general dread and hatred of the Hebrews, on account of the destruction of the kindred state which Sihon had ruled, on the other side Jordan. The Gibeonites being greatly alarmed, sent to Joshua to invoke his assistance, in virtue of the covenant which had been formed with them. He instantly complied. Taking a strong force with him, a rapid night march brought him suddenly upon the Amorites, who were defeated with great slaughter. Those that fled by the way of Bethoran he pursued to Azekah, and to Makkedah*. On the pursuit to the former of these places the Lord thought fit to demonstrate, as usual, that a Superior Power fought for Israel, by causing a tremendous shower of great stones, whereby far greater numbers of the Canaanites were destroyed than by the sword of the Hebrews. Thus persecuted from the heavens above, and pressed by the Israelites in the rear, the survivors dispersed themselves, and continued their flight in different directions; and, probably, under the shelter of the advancing night, would have escaped to their fortified places, had it not pleased God to prolong the light of day, that the Israelites might see to overtake and to destroy the fugitives. No sooner did Joshua regret the approaching night, and reflect that a continuance of daylight alone was wanting to complete his victory, than he received within himself the assurance that God could and would grant even such a favour; and, therefore, under that impulse, and admirably exemplifying that faith which believes that nothing is too hard for the Lord, he cried aloud, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And, accordingly, the sacred narrative tells us, "The sun stood still, and the moon stayed,

* The relative position of these places was thus:—Bethoron (the Nether), twelve miles west by south from Gibeon; Azekah, eight miles south of Bethoron; and Makkedah, six miles south by east from Azekah; in all, about twenty-six miles; but the *direct* distance between Gibeon and *both* Azekah and Makkedah would have been little more than seventeen miles.

until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Jehovah hearkened unto the voice of a man: *for Jehovah fought for Israel.*" That the sun and the moon stood still no one now supposes. The effect required might be produced without to that extent deranging the system of the universe. The system of astronomy then, and until within a recent period, universally prevalent, taught that both the sun and the moon had a rotatory motion around the earth; and that the phenomena of day and night were caused by that motion, as in fact they *appear* to be. We do not read in the sacred text that God himself declared that the sun and moon stood still on this occasion. If we suppose that God intimated to the heart of Joshua that He would grant him a miraculous prolongation of the day, if his faith were of such strength as to ask for it publicly at the head of his army, we may conclude that Joshua would make that request in such terms as, according to his own conceptions, were proper to be employed in asking for such a miracle,—and this was, that the sun and moon might be arrested in their courses, which he thought alone adequate to produce the effect required,—or rather, which he thought must happen if the favour were granted which he was inspired to ask. God granted his request, and the day was prolonged as he desired. The historians of the times recorded the fact according to what appeared to them, and agreeably to what was then thought to be true astronomy; and, accordingly, the sun and moon appearing, and being deemed not for several hours to have moved forward in their courses, both the author of the book of Jasher, and Joshua himself, so record it in their several books. Although Joshua wrote his book under the direction of a divine assistance, we have no reason to conclude that God would interpose to prevent him from recording the fact in this manner. "If God had inspired Joshua to relate this fact in a manner more agreeable to true astronomy, *unless he had also inspired the world with a like astronomy to receive it*, it would rather have tended to raise among those who heard and read of it, disputes and oppositions of science falsely so called, than have promoted the great ends of religion intended by it."*

That the day was prolonged, and that the apparent progress of the sun and moon was stayed, are the facts of this great miracle. *How* these effects were produced, is a question which has been largely discussed, and on which very various opinions have been entertained. It is our belief that no positive conclusion can be arrived at on this point. So signal a miracle, regarded *merely* as enabling the Hebrews to complete their victory, has seemed to many persons an uncalled for and disproportionate manifestation of divine power. But they should consider that nothing was better calculated than this to confirm the faith of the Hebrews, by demonstrating that the greatest of the heathen gods—the sun and moon—were His creatures, at his disposal, and under his control; while the same thing was exceedingly calculated to shake the confidence of the Canaanites in the gods to whom they looked for safety and deliverance, and to convince them that He who fought for the Hebrews was mightier than they. It was calculated to encourage the one party and to dishearten the other in nearly the same proportion.

To return to the history. The five kings who had escaped both the sword and the shower of stones, being now well satisfied that all was lost, betook themselves to the shelter of a cave near Makkedah, in which they hoped to remain undiscovered until the pursuers were withdrawn. But their retreat was detected, and information of it brought to Joshua, who ordered the mouth of the cave to be closed up with large stones until the military operations of the day were completed. Among these operations, Makkedah itself was taken, and Joshua made that place his present head-quarters, while parts of his force continued the pursuit of the fugitives. Some of them escaped to the fenced cities,

* Shuckford, book xii., where the whole subject is very ingeniously and ably discussed.

but the greater part of them were destroyed. When all the pursuers were returned to Makkedah, Joshua directed the five kings to be brought forth from the cave. They were thrown down before the congregation, and the chiefs placed their feet upon their necks, according to the old Oriental practice of military triumph, to which there are many allusions in Scripture, and which their respective sculptures indicate to have existed among the people of Egypt and of Persia.

[Treading the conquered under feet.]

They were then slain, and their bodies hung upon trees until towards evening, when, according to the law, they were taken down. The corpses were then thrown again into the cave, which was closed up by large stones. This hanging upon a tree was a posthumous punishment of ignominy, as was the burning of the dead body; but the law prescribed no punishment which rendered the living ignominious. The remarks which have been made upon the execution of the king of Ai apply equally to the present instance, which therefore calls for no further remark.

Joshua, with the diligence of an able commander, availed himself of the panic which this signal victory was calculated to inspire, and overran the southern part of Palestine; and, no longer terrified at the sight of walled towns, the Hebrews took, in rapid succession, the cities of Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Debir, and Hebron. The king of Gezir, named Horam, attempted, indeed, to raise the siege of Lachish, but was defeated and utterly destroyed with all his people.

In this short and very successful campaign, "Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as Jehovah the God of Israel had commanded."* He then returned to the general camp at Gilgal.

These last conquests of Joshua, which brought most of the southern parts of Canaan under the power of the Hebrews, fairly roused the princes of the north, who hitherto had watched the progress of the storm at a distance. Jabin, king of Hazor, took the lead in organizing a most formidable league, whereby it was hoped that the Hebrew host might be crushed and overwhelmed at one blow. Not only the princes of Palestine Proper, but many high up among the mountains and valleys of Lebanon, and many from distant places beyond Jordan, were drawn into this grand alliance. The assembled host was compared to the sands upon the sea-shore for multitude. Profiting by their relations by land and sea with the Assyrians and Egyptians, some of the assembled nations had, after their example, a force in cavalry, in chariots of war, and offered a military aspect altogether new to the present race of Israelites and very formidable to them. They were at first alarmed; but, full of confidence in the words of their leader, who had always conducted them to victory, and now called them to new triumphs, they followed with the utmost alacrity and ardour to what threatened to be the most formidable conflict in which they had yet been engaged. The rendezvous of the allies was at "the waters of Merom," probably the lake Semochonitis, where they remained to organize their forces, and arrange the plan of the campaign: and here they lay, when Joshua, according to his usual tactics, having penetrated to Upper Galilee by rapid marches, fell suddenly upon them by surprise: taking his position so as to shut up their cavalry, and deprive their chariots of all scope for action, he carried terror and death into their ranks, and threw

* Josh. x. 40.

them into disorder. The carnage among the allies was horrible, and the rout complete. The great body of those who escaped the first edge of the sword fled towards Sidon, westward, while another stream of fugitives hastened eastward, towards Mizpeh, but they were in every direction so closely pursued that most of them fell by the way. Jabin himself escaped for the present to his own city of Hazor.

Joshua being now master of the immense spoils of the league, might have thought of employing against the remaining enemies the chariots and horses which had fallen into his hands. But faithful in his obedience to all the commands of Jehovah, he burned all the chariots, and all the horses had been in the first instance ham-strung by his orders. Joshua had received a special command to act thus; but even without it, the injunctions of the law against a force in cavalry and chariots would probably have determined his conduct. The reasons for this are easy to find. Horses were only used in those early ages for war or parade, and were of comparatively little use in a mountainous country like Palestine. For riding and burden, asses, mules, and camels were preferred, and oxen for draught. And then so much importance was attached to the use of horses and chariots in war, that the possession of them was likely to tempt the Israelites to foreign wars, in opposition to the Divine intention to keep them separate from the nations in a compact territory.

Joshua then hastened against the metropolitan city of Hazor, in which king Jabin had taken refuge. It was reckoned the chief of all the cities belonging to the confederated kings; and when taken, the inhabitants were all cut off, and the town itself burnt to the ground. This was the only one of the cities *standing on hills** which Joshua destroyed. The rest were preserved for the occupation of the Israelites, who took all the property they found in them for spoil. The men of all these cities were put to the sword; but it will be recollected that the towns were all taken by assault, and that the inhabitant males of these cities were their defenders. It appears such towns in the plains and valleys as fell into the hands of the Israelites were destroyed. The reason for this distinction is obvious. Seeing that so large a number of the men were required in general military operations, it was impossible for the Hebrews to occupy and defend all the towns which they took. They, therefore, retained only those which from their situation on the hills were the strongest and most easily defended; and destroyed those in the plains which were the most exposed and the most difficult to defend.

This and the former signal victories, connected as some of them are with manifest intimation that the Israelites were favoured by a Power which had no limit or control, so intimidated some of the Canaanites, that they appear to have left the country in search of new and more peaceful habitations. Some appear to have withdrawn into and beyond the northern mountains; while others might find in the ships of their unmolested kindred, the Phœnicians, easy access to the remoter shores of the Mediterranean. Bochart and others have taken much pains to trace the fugitives in Asia and Africa. They seem to have been most successful in finding traces of nations or tribes of Canaanitish origin in the northern coasts of Africa. The Jews themselves have old traditions to this effect. The thing is indeed highly probable in itself, and is well supported by the corroborative circumstances which such writers have adduced; and this even without laying undue stress on the testimony of Procopius (living in the time of the Emperor Justinian), who, in his history of the Vandals, reports that in Mauritania Tingitana there was an inscription upon certain pillars, purporting that "the inhabitants of the country had fled thither from the face of the robber Joshua, the son of Nun." The Scripture itself is silent in these matters, save that it incidentally transpires† that two

* This is doubtless the true meaning (and so the Samaritan and Vulgate understand it) of what our version renders by "stood still in their strength," a phrase which conveys no particular meaning.

† Josh. xxiv. 12. This had been foretold in Exod. xxiii. 28, and Deut. vii. 20; and as terms there employed seem more extensive, probably there were more than the two instances which are incidentally noticed.

Amoritish nations were "driven out" by "the hornet," which may be supposed to be the formidable insect which Bruce describes under the Arabic name of *Zimb*. No one who knows the East doubts the power of an insect-plague to drive a people from one country to another; and there are Greek and Latin traditions, traced with learned ingenuity by Dr. Hales, which describe nations thus expelled from their native seats in the east, and seeking a refuge in the west. The vindictive power that was supposed to preside over this dreadful scourge came to be worshipped at Ekron, in Philistia, through fear, the reigning motive of pagan superstition, under the name of *Baalzebub*, or "Lord of the hornet."

The victories which we have recorded gave the Hebrews a predominant power both in the north and south of the country; nor was there, in the time of Joshua, any spirit or power in the remaining Canaanites to form any new combination against the invaders. A long and desultory warfare therefore ensued against the petty princes who occupied the unconquered portions of the country, a great number of whom were subdued in detail, and their strong cities taken by force of arms; for it does not appear that any one town was surrendered without fighting, besides the cities which belonged to the Gibeonites. The manner in which this information is conveyed in the Book of Joshua* clearly intimates that although it was not the Divine *intention* that the Canaanites should be spared to remain mixed with the Hebrews in the land which the latter were destined to occupy, yet that *if*, at least hypothetically, any city *had* submitted peaceably, from the conviction that the God who fought for the Hebrews was greater than all gods, and One whose power it was useless to resist, they would have been spared. But as it is, if we could overlook the peculiar circumstances, and forget the infatuation which prevented them from receiving those convictions which the prodigies wrought by Jehovah seem calculated to have inspired, it would be impossible to withhold our praise and sympathy for the spirit and courage with which they contended even to the last—even to the death—for the possession of the homes and hearths they had received from their fathers.

It was not a part of the Divine intention that the Canaanites should be expelled all at once. It had, many years before, been announced by Moses, that they would be driven out gradually before the Hebrews †. The principal reasons given for this was lest the land, being comparatively depopulated, "the beasts of the field" should multiply to the prejudice of the new occupants. This implies much more than it expresses. It shows that while the Israelites were in the first instance assisted, by potent miracles, to win great and comprehensive victories, thereby to gain a firm footing and a predominant power in the land, it was determined that they should pass by natural and progressive steps into and through their transition state as a nation. The small and disunited nations of Canaan were thus gradually to yield to the expulsive action of a united and increasing people, in the same proportion in which the wants of that people were developed. But besides this leading reason, that the Hebrews were only to get as much of the country as their numbers enabled them to occupy and defend, two others of much importance are also alleged.—One of these, that by having enemies left in the country, against whom the necessities of their position would compel them constantly to act, they might be properly trained to war and military service, of which they formerly knew little or nothing ‡, but which was necessary in those ages to enable them to maintain themselves in the country they were to receive; the other, that by having among them a people of different habits and religion, their obedience to the system of doctrine and policy which they had been taught, might be sufficiently tried and exercised §.

* "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, *and that they might have no favour*, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses." Josh. xi. 19, 20.

† Exod. xxiii. 28—30. ‡ Judges iii. 1, 2.
§ Josh. xxiii. 11, &c.

At the end of five years from the passage of the Jordan, the results of the war were, that thirty-one of the petty kings of Canaan had been defeated and dispossessed of their dominions. Among the natives extirpated or expelled were the gigantic Anakim in and about Hebron, whom there has been such frequent occasion to mention. Some of them sought a refuge in the country of the Philistines, where their descendants are found a long while after. But others appear to have returned, probably while the attention of Joshua was engaged by the affairs of the north, and re-established themselves in parts of their ancient seats, from which they were ultimately expelled by Caleb.

In the sixth year it seemed that, as compared with the allotment of territory to the two tribes and a half beyond Jordan, sufficient to provide for three tribes more on the same liberal scale had been obtained. To recognise that God was the sovereign proprietor of the soil, and had the entire right to its disposal, his decision was appealed to by a solemn lot, to determine the particular tribes to which his first distribution of territory in the promised land should be assigned. By this course all jealousies were prevented which might have arisen, had the distribution been made by Joshua, or any other person, or body of persons, on their own authority. The lot consigned this territory to Judah, Ephraim, and the unprovided half tribe of Manasseh. The distinct manner in which the first provision was thus made for the very tribes which had received from Jacob the birthright and the double portion, while it served to intimate to the other tribes that the lot had not been fortuitously determined, must also have contributed in a considerable degree to give a further sanction to the superiority which the tribes of Judah and Ephraim had already begun to assume.

This first division of lands took place in the year before Christ 1602. It is not usually in histories distinguished from what was really the second and final distribution; but a careful view of the account of this matter which the Book of Joshua contains, will show that the distinction ought to be made; and that the final distribution to the seven remaining tribes did not take place till some years after that by which provision was made for Judah, Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Before the internal distribution to particular families was made of the territories thus allotted, the aged Caleb presented himself before the assembly, and reminded it that, besides the prolonged days which had been granted to himself and Joshua when they contradicted the "evil report" which the other spies gave of the land they had traversed, Moses had also promised that the land in which he had beheld the gigantic Anakim should be given to him for a possession, because he had "wholly followed JEHOVAH his God." He thankfully acknowledged that the Lord had, according to his promise, kept him alive for forty-five years, while the generation to which he belonged had perished: and that now, although four score and five years old, he was as strong and as able for council or war as in that day when Moses sent him to explore the land of Canaan. And although the land promised to him was now again in the possession of Anakim, and the towns they held were very strong, he was confident that God would be with him, and enable him to drive them out, if the grant made by Moses were now confirmed. It was so; and he succeeded not only in expelling three chiefs of the Anakim who held possession of Hebron, but in getting into his hands the other strong town of Debir, which was upon the lands assigned to him. A circumstance connected with the taking of the latter place illustrates some of the customs of the time. Caleb caused it to be publicly known that he would give his daughter Achsah in marriage to whosoever should take this place for him. This enterprise was undertaken by Othniel, the son of Caleb's brother, and who, in fact, had by custom the best right to the hand of his cousin, and who would have incurred some disgrace if he had allowed her to be won *in this way* by another. He succeeded, and received his reward. Hereafter we shall find Othniel's name among the judges of Israel. These customs—the absolute right of a

father to dispose of his daughter, or to propose her as the reward of some perilous enterprise—still exist in the East, and we meet with them often in Arabian histories and tales.

The Ephraimites, to whose tribe Joshua belonged, seem to have considered that the promised and now granted provision for Caleb, implied the Divine intention that a similar provision should be made for Joshua himself, whose merits were as distinguished as those of Caleb on the same occasion, and whose services had since been very great. They therefore gave him the choice of his inheritance; and he selected the city of Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim, which he repaired, and ultimately made the place of his residence.

Another interesting circumstance arose in connection with the internal distribution of the territory allotted to the tribe of Judah. It seems that before the time of Moses, as long after, in most oriental nations, a female could not inherit land. If a man died, leaving daughters only, his property descended to his brother, or the children of his brother, overpassing the daughters. The propriety of this and other laws of landed inheritance was never so likely to be questioned as by a people who had not hitherto possessed freehold properties, but had the prospect of such possessions immediately before them. Now there was a man of an eminent family in Manasseh, called Zelophehad, who died, leaving five daughters, but no son. While the Israelites were in the plains of Moab, and the laws of inheritance had already become a subject of immediate interest, these women applied to Moses, representing their case, and argued that if the inheritance which would have been the due of their father passed to another family, because he had no son, then that family would in fact become extinct—a very terrible calamity to an Israelite, and calculated greatly to depress the already low estimation in which daughters, as compared with sons, were held. Moses felt much difficulty in this question, and reserved it for the special directions of God. The response was, that if a man had no sons, his daughters might inherit; that if he had neither sons nor daughters, the inheritance should devolve to his brethren and their heirs; but that if he had no brother, to the brothers of his father and their heirs; and, failing these, to the nearest of kin. This determination seems to have been much canvassed; and some difficulties appeared, which induced the family chiefs of that branch of Manasseh's tribe to which Zelophehad belonged, to apply to Moses, and to represent that females thus inheriting might perhaps marry into other tribes, and thus carry out of their own tribe a portion of its original property. Moses admitted the force of this objection, and decided that although such heiresses should be free to marry whoever they pleased, their choice should be limited to the tribe to which they belonged themselves. This determination was satisfactory to all parties, not excepting the daughters of Zelophehad; for they did more than was required of them, by marrying into the families into which the inheritance would have descended, had their own claims been overlooked.

Now, when the actual distribution of the allotted territory to the families of Manasseh took place, the daughters of Zelophehad appeared to claim the inheritance which devolved to them under this decision, and which they accordingly received.

It is impossible to estimate too highly the consequences of the law upon the position of the women among the Israelites. We know that the privileges to which any class of persons is *eligible* raises the condition and estimation of that class, even though it happen that only a few can receive the actual privileges which have this operation. On this rule, which, we think, is of universal application, it is impossible but that the eligibility of women to inherit landed estates must have had a most favourable influence upon their general condition. And we think the studious reader of the Bible will discover that women, among the Hebrews, were far more favourably considered, and allowed a more prominent and distinguished place in the social system *after* than before this law existed; and he will see

cause to attribute to the operation of this same law the unquestionable fact, that the position of the women among the Hebrews was far more free and independent than in any country of the ancient East (Egypt perhaps excepted), or than in any country beyond Rome, after Rome came into existence: that it was more so than in the modern East is known to all. And we think it may not be going too far to affirm that the social rank which woman takes in all the countries of Christendom, as compared with countries which are not Christian, may very fairly be considered a remote result of this and some other laws, whereby Moses determined the social position which woman should occupy. And the social position of woman in any nation is the least uncertain test of that nation's moral civilization.

The formal occupation, now taken of the conquered territory, suggested a suitable occasion for the removal of the tabernacle, from the outskirts of the country at Gilgal, where it had so long remained, to a station more central and therefore more convenient for the resort of the tribes now about to spread themselves over the conquered land. Shiloh, in Ephraim, nearly in the centre of that land, was chosen for the purpose. In the way thither, and while the Hebrew host still remained together, the opportunity was taken to obey the command of Moses respecting the renewal of the covenant with God on the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim*.

It is difficult for the mind of man to conceive a ceremonial more truly grand than that whereby the far-seeing Legislator had provided that the people should once more, before they took possession of their inheritance, declare their solemn acceptance of those institutions which had been given to them, and bindingly oblige them so to adhere to them. And if Moses, who was never himself in the promised land, had surveyed its whole extent, or the extent of the whole world, for a site most fitting for this great transaction, one could not have been found more appropriate than the twin mounts—the fair and fertile Gerizim and the blasted Ebal, with the long, narrow, and beautiful valley by which they are separated. Here in the first instance were set up the large stones, which being covered with plaster, after the Egyptian fashion, were written over "very plainly" with the principles of the law, that the people there assembled might be fully aware of that to which they were about to declare their obedience. Their sacrifices were offered upon a large altar, built upon Mount Ebal, of unhewn stones, according to the law. The ark, attended by the priests, remained in the valley below, while on each side, up either mountain, stood the thousands of Israel, none being wanting, from the chiefs, the Judges and the Levites, to the women, the children, and the stranger. All were there. In that vast audience, six tribes, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulon, Dan, and Naphtali, stood upon the barren Ebal, to pronounce the curses of the law upon the wrong-doer and the disobedient; and six, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, upon the pleasant Gerizim, to pronounce its blessings upon the well-doer and the obedient. And as each clause of cursing or of blessing was pronounced, there rose, with one vast rushing voice from the living hills, the AMEN! "So be it!" by which that vast multitude declared their assent to the announced conditions.

After this (as we suppose) the congregation proceeded to Shiloh to set up the tabernacle, where it remained for above four hundred and fifty years.

The two tribes and a half, which had lately been provided for, then proceeded to establish themselves in the territories which had been assigned to them.

Of the history of the following five or six years we know but little. We have the most curiosity to know how the seven unprovided tribes disposed of themselves during this time. Most probably they remained in camp

* We are aware that the solemn ceremony at Ebal and Gerizim is placed earlier in the Book of Joshua; but in some way or other it appears to have got out of its proper place, as the context shows. The order of the conquest of Canaan, as related in that book, makes it manifest that this ceremonial could not have taken place *sooner* than where we now place it. Geddes places it *later* still. But we consider that when some of the tribes were about to disperse to their new homes, and when the ark was about being removed to Shiloh, which was but ten miles from Shechem, was the most obvious and probable occasion.

at Shiloh, around the tabernacle, as they did before at Gilgal. That some engaged in a desultory warfare with the unconquered states is scarcely questionable; but that the first vigour of this warfare had considerably relaxed, is evident from the reproach of Joshua to the seven tribes, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" It seems then to have occurred to him that if the lands of the country were distributed in proper allotments to those tribes, without regard to their being conquered or unconquered, its own interests would induce each tribe to exert itself to gain possession of the territory which fell to it. It seemed that enough had been done by the nation at large; and that the rest might be left to the particular tribes which were to be benefited. It had also become desirable that the large draft of 40,000 men from the tribes beyond Jordan, who had hitherto taken part in the enterprises of their western brethren, should be allowed to return to their homes.

But some inconvenience had resulted on the former occasion from proportioning the parts without having surveyed the whole. It already appeared that the allotment of the tribe of Ephraim was not sufficient for its wants. This fact, by the bye, shows the perfect impartiality of the distribution, or, in other words, that it was really, as it professed to be, left to the Lord. For Ephraim was Joshua's own tribe, and therefore the one whom he might have been, of himself, the most inclined to favour. However, when the Ephraimites complained of their confined limits, they were permitted to subdue for their own use as much more neighbouring territory as they wanted, before the distribution to the other tribes took place. On the other hand, it appeared that the tribe of Judah had considerably more territory than it needed or could occupy, in consequence of which, when the actual extent of the whole country to be portioned out became better known, two of the smaller tribes, Simeon and Dan, received their shares out of the territory which had been at first assigned to Judah.

Such circumstances clearly pointed out the advantage, if not necessity, of an actual survey of the whole country before the designed distribution to the unprovided tribes was made. Joshua therefore directed that each of the seven tribes should select three competent men, who should traverse the whole country, and make a survey of it, bringing back the results entered carefully in a book. It would be curious to know whether an attempt at mapping the surveyed districts formed any part of this undertaking. It is only stated that they "described it .... in a book," without mention of the nature of the description, save that the land was described "by cities," and "in seven parts." At all events this is the first example of a topographical survey on record: and it shows that there must have been some knowledge of geometry among the Hebrews; and this had doubtless been acquired in Egypt.

Seven months were occupied in this survey. At the expiration of which the surveyors returned with the requisite information in their books. The lots were then taken before the Lord in Shiloh; and that He, the Supreme proprietor of the soil, did in fact regulate the resulting distribution must have appeared evident to all the tribes, by the circumstance that the portions thus assigned to them were, severally, in exact conformity with the descriptions which, two hundred and fifty years before, Jacob had, in his dying prophecy, given of the territory which each of his sons should inherit. The *northern* portion of the country, in after times called Galilee, was divided among the four tribes of Naphtali, Zebulon, Issachar, and Asher. The *central* portion, afterwards called Samaria, was given to the house of Joseph, that is, to Ephraim and the unprovided half tribe of Manasseh. And the southern part, which in aftertimes formed the kingdom of Judah as distinct from that of Israel, was allotted to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan, the patrimony of the two latter being, as just intimated, taken out of that which had been wholly assigned to Judah.

Thus *twelve* tribes were provided for; as the tribe of Joseph was counted as two—Ephraim and Manasseh, and Levi was not

counted at all. But the last-named tribe received from each of the others a certain number of cities, making forty-eight in all, each of them with a domain of between eight and nine hundred acres of land, for gardens and pasture-fields. Of these cities, the Kohathites received twenty-three, the Gershonites thirteen, and the Merarites twelve. Six of the forty-eight, three on each side Jordan, were appointed for cities of refuge, namely, Kadesh (in Galilee), Shechem, and Hebron, on the west; and Bezer, Ramoth-Gilead, and Golan, beyond the river. Thirteen of the forty-eight cities were also assigned to the priests as distinguished from the other Levites; and it strikingly illustrates the overruling providence which directed these matters, that the lot, by which all these arrangements were determined, fixed these cities near each other, and also near what, several centuries after, was, by the erection of the temple at Jerusalem, rendered the seat of their duties. Thus we see prospective arrangements made, in the secret providence of God, for a long subsequent event; and not only for *this* event, but probably with reference to the ultimate separation of the Hebrew kingdoms: for all these towns were in what finally became the kingdom of Judah.

This second and final division of territory took place in the year 1596 before Christ.

The time was now come when the 40,000 men of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, might be allowed to return to their own heritage beyond Jordan. In his farewell address to them, Joshua highly commended the fidelity with which they had fulfilled their engagement, in fighting with and for their unprovided brethren, after they had received their own inheritance; and he earnestly charged them to "Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses, the servant of JEHOVAH, charged you; to *love* JEHOVAH, your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." With his blessing they then took their departure, greatly enriched by their equal share in the spoil of the Canaanites, which, we are told, consisted of "very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment." This they were to divide with those who had remained at home to occupy and protect their own country.

The departing body was so full of good feeling, that when they had crossed the Jordan, and entered their own territories, they bethought them of erecting a great altar, as a monument to posterity of the real connection between the tribes which the river separated. This transaction produced a strong sensation when the news of it was brought to Shiloh. The object of this procedure was entirely misunderstood. The altar was taken to be a monument of separation rather than of union. For as there could be but one altar for national worship, the erection of another altar beyond Jordan was judged to intimate an intention to form a separate establishment for worship in that country; which, even if at first intended for the honour of the true God, would certainly in the end lead to idolatry and disunion; and, while it might recognise Jehovah as GOD, would overlook those obligations by which all the Israelites were bound to render service to him as their KING. In short, the act, as viewed by the other tribes, was an overt act of rebellion, and, as such, they determined to punish it, unless a sufficient explanation could be obtained. The whole congregation assembled at Shiloh, ready to make war against the tribes beyond Jordan. But first they sent a deputation to expostulate with them, and to require an explanation. This deputation was suitable to the gravity of the occasion, consisting of Phineas, the son of the high-priest, and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribes west of the Jordan. On its arrival in Gilead, the deputation, assuming the fact to be as they supposed, proceeded to threaten the two and half tribes with punishment for their rebellion against Jehovah and the congregation. If they disliked the lands which they had received beyond the river, as being "unclean," or unhonoured with the presence of the tabernacle, or if they deemed

it too hard for them to resort beyond the river to render the periodical service which the law required, then let them come and share with the other tribes in the country west of the river. The punishments which had befallen the whole congregation for the sin in the matter of Baal-peor and of Achan, were then mentioned for a warning.

The two and half tribes were much distressed at this imputation, and with much animation and eloquence repelled the charge, and explained that their object had been exactly to prevent the very alienation and separation of which they were accused of contemplating. After declaring this in general terms, they proceeded to explain their precise object more particularly, and we cite their words, because they very impressively intimate the general object of such erections. They had done it lest "your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with JEHOVAH, the God of Israel? for Jehovah hath made Jordan a border between us and you ye children of Reuben and ye children of Gad; ye have no part in Jehovah. So shall your children make our children cease from fearing Jehovah. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar,—not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, but that it may be A WITNESS between us, and you, and our generations after us .... that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in JEHOVAH."*

An explanation so much in agreement with the spirit and object of the Mosaic institutions, gave great satisfaction to the ambassadors, and afterwards to the people who awaited the result at Shiloh. They blessed God, and dispersed to their several homes.

The tribes beyond Jordan gave the name of ED (the witness) to the monument they had erected, and which continued long after to bear its testimony to the unity of Israel.

Joshua appears to have survived about fourteen years after this, during which he lived for the most in his own city of Timnath-serah. During these years, the people, being now fairly established in the country, and finding that they had land enough for their present wants, do not seem to have been much engaged in war, in order to obtain possession of those parts of the country which still remained in the hands of the Canaanites. It is not unlikely that Joshua himself was desirous before he died to see their habits take the intended direction towards agriculture. And, no doubt, during those years in which the war was slackened or suspended, much progress was made in that transition by which the Hebrews were to pass into the condition of an agricultural people.

When Joshua felt that the day of his death was at hand, he called the people together, that before he died he might have the satisfaction of again receiving the pledge of their obedience to their Divine King and his institutions. He addressed them, and after reminding them of the miracles which had been wrought for them, and the victories and blessings with which they had been favoured, he called upon them to purge away the idolatry which still lurked among them—no longer to serve "*the gods which their fathers served on the other side of the flood* [Euphrates], *and in Egypt*," but to devote themselves in entire sincerity and truth to JEHOVAH. He demanded that they should at once decide the alternatives before them—either to serve Jehovah wholly, or the gods of their fathers and of the nations among whom they now dwelt; adding, "But as for me, and my house, we will serve Jehovah." To which the people heartily responded, "We also will serve JEHOVAH; for he is our God." He explained to them the obligations which that declaration involved; but they repeated it again, and once more in the usual terms of a solemn covenant. The terms of this covenant Joshua wrote down in the book of the law; and for a more public testimonial of this solemn engagement, he set up a great stone under an oak that grew hard by the tabernacle, and, in conformity with the ideas so usually connected with these memorials, he said, "Behold, this stone *shall be a witness* unto us; for *it hath heard all the words* of Jehovah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore

* See Josh. xxii. 21–29.

a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

Joshua could now die in peace. He did die soon after, at the advanced age of 110 years (B. C. 1582), and was buried in the borders of his own inheritance, in the side of *the hill* Gaash. Eleazar, the high-priest, did not long outlive him. He was buried *in a hill* of Mount Ephraim, and was succeeded by his son Phineas. *Hills* are mentioned as places of burial, because the sepulchres were usually excavations in the sides of hills. Even at the present day the cemeteries (though only for graves) of the East are commonly upon the slopes of hills, outside the towns to which they belong.

The embalmed body of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought with them out of Egypt, had before this been deposited, according to his wish, in "the parcel of ground" at Shechem, which his father Jacob had given to him. That the lot gave to the tribe of Ephraim the territory which included this small patrimony, is a marked instance of the superintending power by which that mode of distribution was controlled and regulated.

The character which Joshua sustained is in many respects as peculiar as that of Moses, although of a very different nature. Joshua was not the successor of Moses, nor had Joshua himself any successor. They were both appointed to discharge peculiar and special services by the King, JEHOVAH. Moses was his minister in the deliverance and in legislating for the Hebrews: Joshua was his general, specially appointed by him to conquer the promised land and portion it out among the people. Not Moses, nor Joshua, but God himself, was the ruler of the state, and they were merely his servants. How eminently Joshua was qualified by his decision of character, his valour and his faith, for the duties confided to him, and how well and worthily he discharged them, has appeared in the narrative. "He was," in the language of Jahn, "a man whose whole life was devoted to the establishment of the theocratic policy, and consequently to the establishment of the true religion—services which ought to endear his memory to all succeeding ages."

CHAPTER II

FROM JOSHUA TO GIDEON.

FROM Joshua to Samuel (a period of about 474 years) the condition of the Israelites varied according as the fundamental law of the state was observed or transgressed, exactly as Moses had predicted, and as the sanctions of the law had determined.

The last admonitions of Joshua, and the solemn renewal of the covenant with Jehovah, failed to produce all the effect intended. That generation, indeed, never suffered idolatry to become *predominant*, but still they were very negligent with respect to the expulsion of the Canaanites. Only a few tribes made war upon them, and even they were soon weary of the contest. They spared their dangerous and corrupting neighbours, and, contrary to express statute, were satisfied with making them tributary. They even became connected with them by unlawful marriages, and then it was no longer easy for them to exterminate or banish the near relatives of their own families. The Hebrews thus rendered the execution of so severe a law in a manner impossible, and wove for themselves the web in which they were afterwards entangled. Their Canaanitish relatives invited them to their festivals, where not only lascivious songs were sung in honour of the gods, but fornication and unnatural lusts were indulged in *as part of the Divine service*. These debaucheries, then consecrated by the religious customs of all

nations, were gratifying to the sensual appetites; and the subject of Jehovah too readily submitted himself to such deities, so highly honoured by his connections, and worshipped in all the neighbouring nations. At first, probably, a symbolical representation of Jehovah was set up, but this was soon transferred to an idol, or was invoked as an idol by others. Idolatrous images were afterwards set up, together with the image of Jehovah, and the Israelites fondly imagined that they should be the more prosperous if they rendered homage to the ancient gods of the land. The propensity to idolatry, which was predominant in all the rest of the world, thus spread itself among the chosen people like a plague. From time to time idolatry was publicly professed, and this national treachery to their king, Jehovah, always brought with it national misfortunes.

However, it does not appear that any form of idolatry was *openly* tolerated until that generation was extinct, which, under Joshua, had sworn anew to the covenant with Jehovah. After that the rulers were unable or unwilling any longer to prevent the public worship of pagan deities. But the Hebrews, rendered effeminate by this voluptuous religion, and forsaken by their king, Jehovah, were no longer able to contend with their foes, and were forced to bend their necks under a foreign yoke. In this humiliating and painful subjection to a conquering people, they called to mind their deliverance from Egypt, the ancient kindnesses of Jehovah, the promises and threatenings of the law: then they forsook their idols, who could afford them no help,—they returned to the sacred tabernacle, and then found a deliverer who freed them from their bondage. The reformation was generally of no longer duration than the life of the deliverer. As soon as that generation was extinct, idolatry again crept in by the same way, and soon became predominant. Then followed subjection and oppression under the yoke of some neighbouring people, until a second reformation prepared them for a new deliverance. Between these extremes of prosperity and adversity, the consequences of their fidelity or treachery to their Divine king, the Hebrew nation was continually fluctuating until the time of Samuel. Such were the arrangements of Providence, that as soon as idolatry gained the ascendancy, some one of the neighbouring nations grew powerful, acquired the preponderance, and subjected the Hebrews. Jehovah always permitted their oppressions to become sufficiently severe to arouse them from their slumbers, to remind them of the sanctions of the law, and to turn them again to their God and king. Then a hero arose, who inspired the people with courage, defeated their enemies, abolished idolatry, and re-established the authority of Jehovah. As the Hebrews, in the course of time, became more obstinate in their idolatry, so each subsequent oppression of the nation was always more severe than the preceding. So difficult was it, as mankind were then situated, to preserve a knowledge of the true God in the world, although so repeatedly and so expressly revealed, and in so high a degree made manifest to the senses*.

After this general view of the whole period to which the remainder of the present book is devoted, we may proceed to the historical details from which that view is collected.

Soon after the death of Joshua, and while the contemporary elders still lived, the Israelites made some vigorous and successful exertions to extend their territory. The most remarkable of these exertions was that made by the tribe of Judah, assisted by that of Simeon. They slew 10,000 Canaanites and Perizzites in the territory of Bezek, the king of which, Adoni-Bezek (literally, "my lord of Bezek"), contrived to make his escape; but he was pursued and taken, when the conquerors cut off his thumbs and great toes. Now this, at the first view, was a barbarous act. It was not a mode in which the Hebrews were wont to treat their captives; and the reason for it—that it was intended as an act of just retaliation, or, as we should say, of poetic justice—appears from the bitter remark of Adoni-Bezek himself:—"Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done,

* Jahn, b. iii. sect. 20.

so God hath requited me." This proves that, as we have already on more than one occasion intimated, the war practices of the Israelites —especially in the treatment of their captives —was not more barbarous, and, in many respects, less barbarous, than those of their contemporaries; and that even their polished neighbours, the Egyptians, were not in this respect above them. Adoni-bezek died soon

[Captives bound.]

after at Jerusalem, to which place he was taken by the conquerors. They at this time had possession of the lower part of that town, and soon after succeeded in taking the upper city, upon Mount Zion, which the Jebusites had hitherto retained. They sacked it and burned it with fire. But as we afterwards again find it in the occupation of the Jebusites, down to the time of David, it seems they took advantage of some one of the subsequent oppressions of Israel, to recover the site and rebuild the upper city.

Eleazar the high-priest, as we have seen, did not long survive Joshua; and the remnant of the seventy elders, originally appointed by Moses to assist him in the government of the nation, soon followed them to the tomb. While these venerable persons lived, the Israelites remained faithful to their Divine King and to his laws. But soon after their death, the beginnings of corruption appeared. A timely attempt was made to check its progress by the remonstrances and threatenings of a prophet from Gilgal. But although they quailed under the rebuke which was there administered, the effect was but temporary. The downward course which the nation had taken was speedily resumed; and

[Immolation of Captives.]

it is strikingly illustrated by some circumstances which the author of the Book of Judges has given in an appendix contained in the five last chapters of that book, but which we shall find it more convenient to introduce here in their proper chronological place.

The history of Micah furnishes a very

[Scribe counting Hands (cut off).]

interesting example of the extent to which even Israelites, well disposed in the main, had become familiarised with superstitious and idolatrous practices, and the curious manner in which they managed to make a monstrous and most unseemly alliance between the true doctrine in which they had been brought up and the erroneous notions which they had imbibed.

A woman of Ephraim had, through a mistaken zeal, dedicated a large quantity of

silver (about 550 ounces) to the Lord, intending that her son should make therewith a teraph, in the hope that by this means she might procure to her house the blessings of one who had absolutely forbidden all worship by images. Her son Micah knew not of this sacred appropriation of the money, and took it for the use of the house. But on learning its destination, and hearing his mother lay her curse upon the sacrilegious person by whom she supposed it had been stolen, he became alarmed, and restored her the silver; and received it again from her with directions to give effect to her intention. This he did. He provided a teraph, and all things necessary to the performance of religious services before it, including vestments for a priest. He set apart one of his own sons as priest, until he should be able to procure a Levite to take that character. He had not long to wait. It would seem that the dues of the Levites were not properly paid at this time; for a young Levite, who had lived at Bethlehem, felt himself obliged to leave that place and seek elsewhere a subsistence. Happening to call at Micah's house, he gladly accepted that person's offer to remain and act as priest for the recompense of his victuals, with two suits of clothes (one probably sacerdotal), and eleven shekels of silver*. Micah was delighted at this completion of his establishment, and, with most marvellous infatuation, cried, "Now know I that Jehovah will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Things went on tranquilly for a time. But it happened that the tribe of Dan could not get possession of more than the hilly part of its territory, as the Amorites retained the plain, which was the most rich and valuable part. They therefore sought elsewhere an equivalent territory which might be more easily acquired. Having ascertained that this might be found in the remote but wealthy and peaceable town and district of Laish, near the sources of the Jordan, a body of 600 men was sent to get possession of it. From the persons they had previously sent to explore the country, they had heard of Micah's establishment; and so far from manifesting any surprise or indignation, they viewed the matter much in the same light as Micah did himself. They envied him his idol and his priest, and resolved to deprive him of both, and take them to their new settlement. They did so, notwithstanding the protests and outcries of the owner: and as for the Levite, he was easily persuaded to prefer the priesthood of a clan to that of a single family. His descendants continued long after to exercise the priestly office, in connection with this idol, at Dan—which was the name the conquerors gave to the town of Laish: and it is lamentable to have to add, that there is good reason to suspect that this Levite was no other than a grandson of Moses.

It would seem that the tribe of Benjamin had much the start of the other tribes in the moral corruption, in the infamous vices, which resulted from the looseness of their religious notions, and from the contaminating example of the heathen, with whom they were surrounded and intermixed.

A Levite of Mount Ephraim was on his way home with his wife, whom he was bringing back from her father's house in Bethlehem; and, on the approach of night, he entered the town of Gibeah, in Benjamin, to tarry till the next morning. As the custom of the travellers was, he remained in the street till some one should invite them to his house. But in that wicked place, no hospitable notice was taken of them until an old man, himself from Mount Ephraim, but living there, invited them to his home. In the night that house was besieged by the men of the place, after the same fashion and for the same purpose, as that of Lot had been, when he entertained the angels in Sodom. The efforts of the aged host to turn them from their purpose were unavailing: and as a last resource, the Levite, in the hope of diverting them from their abominable purpose, put forth his wife into the street. She was grievously maltreated by these vile people, until the morning, when they left her. She then went and lay down at the door of the house in which her lord lay; and when he afterwards opened it—she was dead. The Levite laid the corpse upon his beast, and hastened to his home.

* Equal to about twenty-five shillings.

There was a rather mysterious custom, in calling an assembly, by sending to the different bodies or persons which were to compose it a portion of a divided beast*; and it then became awfully imperative upon the party which received the bloody missive, to obey the call which it intimated. To give a horrible intensity to the custom in this case, the Levite—a man of obviously peculiar character—divided his wife's body into twelve parts, and sent one portion to each of the tribes of Israel. The horror-struck tribes, on receiving their portion of the body, and hearing the statement which the messengers delivered, agreed that such a thing had not before been heard of in Israel, and hastened to the place of meeting, which was Mizpeh.

In the great audience there assembled, the Levite declared his wrongs; which, when they had heard, the thousands of Israel vowed not to return to their homes until they had brought the offenders to condign punishment. And to express the earnestness of their purpose, they appointed one-tenth of their whole number to bring in provisions for the rest, that the want of victuals might not, as often happens in oriental warfare, oblige them to disperse before their object was accomplished. But, in the first instance, they sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, explaining the occasion of their assembling, and demanding that the offenders should be delivered up to justice. This the Benjamites were so far from granting that the whole tribe made common cause with the people of Gibeah, and all its force was called out to repel any attempt which the other tribes might make against them. Considering that the force of the eleven tribes amounted to 400,000 able men, whereas the Benjamites could bring together no more than 26,000, the hardihood of this resistance is well worthy of remark, if it does not make out the claim of the Benjamites to that character for indomitable courage which they appear to have acquired. Probably the influence of that acknowledged character upon their opponents, together with their own peculiar skill in the use of the sling, formed their main reliance. Among them there were 700 left-handed men who could sling stones to a hair's breadth and not miss.

The Israelites committed one fatal oversight in this undertaking. Although the affair was of such grave importance, they neglected to consult their Divine King, without whose permission they ought not to have supposed themselves authorised to act as they did. They first decided on war, and then only consulted him as to the manner in which it should be conducted. The consequence was, that they were twice defeated by the Benjamites, who sallied from the town of Gibeah against them. Corrected by this experience, they applied in a proper manner to learn the will of their King; and then the victory was promised to them.

In their next attempt, the Israelites resorted to the same familiar stratagem of ambuscade and of pretended flight, when the besieged sallied forth against them, as that whereby the town of Ai had been taken by Joshua, and with precisely the same result. Eighteen thousand Benjamites, "men of valour," were trodden "down with ease" by the vast host which now enclosed them. The rest endeavoured to escape to the wilderness, but were all overtaken and destroyed, with the exception of 600 who found shelter among the rocks of Rimmon. The conquerors then went through the land, subjecting it to military execution. They set on fire all the towns to which they came, and put to the sword the men, the cattle, and all that came to hand.

But when the heat of the conflict and execution had subsided, the national and clannish feelings of the Israelites were shocked at the reflection that they had extinguished a tribe in Israel. It was true that 600 men remained alive among the rocks of Rimmon; but it was not clear how the race of Benjamin could be continued through them, as, at the very commencement of the undertaking, the Israelites had solemnly sworn that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the Benjamites. They had now leisure to repent of this vow; although, with reference to the vile propen-

* See 1 Sam. xi. 7.

sities exhibited by the people of Gibeah, it was quite natural that in the first excitement such a vow should have been taken.

But now they were sincerely anxious to find means of repairing their error, and to provide the survivors with wives, that the house of Benjamin might not be wholly lost. It was found that the summons whereby the tribes had been assembled, had been unheeded by the men of Jabesh-Gilead, whereby they had exposed themselves to the terrible doom which the very act of summons denounced against the disobedient. That doom was inflicted, save that all the virgins were spared to be wives for the Benjamites. But as these were still insufficient, the unprovided Benjamites were secretly advised to lie in wait in the vineyards near Shiloh, when they attended the next annual festival at the tabernacle; and when the young women of the place came out in dances, as at such times they were wont, they might seize and carry off the number they required. The men followed this advice. And when the fathers and brothers of the stolen maidens began to raise an outcry, the elders, by whom the measure had been counselled, interposed to pacify them, and persuaded them to overlook the matter, in consideration of the difficulties by which the case was surrounded.

The Benjamites then returned to their desolated cities, and rebuilt and re-occupied them as they were able. But from this time Benjamin was the least, although not the least distinguished, of all the tribes.

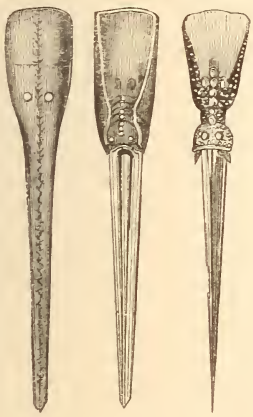
At length (B.C. 1572) the idolatries and demoralization of the Israelites had become so rank, that a fiery trial was judged necessary for their correction. A king named Cushanrishthaim, reigning in Mesopotamia, had extended his power far on this side the Euphrates. He now advanced into Canaan, and, either by victory or menace, rendered the Hebrews tributary. They remained under severe bondage for eight years. At the end of that time, Othniel—that relative of Caleb who has already been mentioned—was incited to put himself at the head of the people and attempt their deliverance. The garrisons which the Mesopotamians had left in the country, were suddenly surprised and slain; the armies of Israel again appeared in the field, and, although at first few in number, they fought at every point the troops opposed to them: and when their numbers were increased by the reinforcements which poured in from all quarters on the first news of probable success, they hazarded a general action, in which they obtained a complete victory over the Mesopotamians, and drove them beyond the Euphrates*.

Othniel remained the acknowledged judge, or regent, of the divine king for forty years. During his administration, the people remained faithful to their God and King, and consequently prospered. But when the beneficial control which Othniel exercised was withdrawn by his death, they fell again into idolatry and crime, and new afflictions became needful to them.

The instruments of their punishment, this time, were the Moabites. By a long peace this nation had recovered from the defeats which they had suffered from the Amorites before the time of Moses: and, perceiving that the Israelites were not invincible, Eglon, the king of Moab, formed a confederacy with the Ammonites and Amalekites, and, with this help, made an attack upon them—probably under the same pretences which we shall find to have been employed on a subsequent occasion. He defeated the idolatrous Hebrews in battle, subdued the tribes beyond Jordan, and the southern tribes on this side the river, and established himself in Jericho, which he must have found a convenient post for intercepting, or at least checking, the communications between the eastern and western tribes. At that place the conquered tribes were obliged to bring him presents, or, in other words, to pay a periodical tribute. This subjection to a king who resided among them was still more oppressive than that from which they had been delivered by Othniel; and it continued more than twice as long—that is, for eighteen years. This oppression must have been particularly heavy upon the tribe of Benjamin, as it was their territory

* This paragraph is partly from Josephus, whose account is here in agreement with, while it fills up, the brief notice which the Book of Judges offers.

to which Jericho belonged, and which was therefore encumbered by the presence of the court of the conqueror. It was natural that those whose necks were the most galled by the yoke, should make the first effort to shake it off. Accordingly the next deliverer was of the tribe of Benjamin. His name was Ehud, one of those left-handed men—or rather, perhaps, men who could use the left hand with as much ease and power as the right—for which this tribe seems to have been remarkable. He conducted a deputation which bore from the Israelites the customary tributes to the king. It seemed that men with weapons were not admitted to the



[Daggers *.]

king's presence: but Ehud had a two-edged dagger under his garment; but as he wore it on the right side, where it is worn by no right-handed man, its presence was not suspected. When he had left the presence, and dismissed his people, Ehud went on as far as the carved images†, which had been placed at Gilgal. The sight of these images, which the Moabites had probably set up by the sacred monument of stones which the Israelites had there set up, seems to have revived the perhaps faltering zeal of the Benjamite, and he returned to Jericho, and to the presence of the king, and intimated that he had a secret message to deliver. The king then withdrew with him to his "summer parlour," which seems to have been such a detached or otherwise pleasantly-situated apartment, as are still usually found in the mansions and gardens of the East, and to which the master retires to enjoy a freer air, and more open prospects than any other part of his dwelling commands, and where also he usually withdraws to enjoy his siesta during the heat of the day. It is strictly a private apartment, which no one enters without being specially invited; and accordingly it is said of this, that it was an apartment "which he had for himself alone." As the king sat in this parlour, Ehud approached him, saying, "I have a message from God unto thee." On hearing that sacred name, the king rose from his seat, and Ehud availed himself of the opportunity of burying his dagger in his bowels. The Benjamite then withdrew quietly, bolting after him the door of the summer parlour; and as such parlours usually communicate by a private stair with the porch, without the *necessity* of passing into or through the interior parts of the mansion, there was nothing to impede his egress, unless the porters at the outer gate had seen cause for suspicion.

The Scripture, as is frequently the case, mentions this as a historical fact, without commendatory or reprehensive remark; and we have no right to infer the approbation which is not expressed. No doubt Ehud's deed was a murder; and the only excuse for it is to be found in its public object, and in the fact that the notions of the East have always been, and are now, far more lax on this point than those which Christian civilization has produced in Europe. There all means of getting rid of a public enemy, whom the arm of the law cannot reach, are considered just and proper. No one can read a few pages of any Oriental history

* These specimens are ancient Egyptian daggers, and are precisely of the same form as those now generally used in Western Asia. They are always two-edged, like Ehud's dagger, and of about the same length, a foot and half. The group represents the same weapon; the first (from the right) shows the unsheathed dagger, the second represents it in its sheath, and that outside represents the back of the sheath. A very common way of using it is to stoop and endeavour to thrust it into the belly of the opponent.

† Not "*quarries*" as in our version. There are and can be no quarries in a plain like that which formed the site of Gilgal, near Jericho.

without being fully aware of this: and it is by Oriental notions rather than by our own that the act of Ehud must, to a certain extent, be judged.

The servants of Eglon supposed that their lord was taking his afternoon sleep in his summer parlour, and hence a considerable time elapsed before his assassination was discovered.

In the mean time Ehud was able to make known the death of the king, and to collect a body of men, with whom he went down to seize the fords of the Jordan, that the Moabites in Canaan might neither receive reinforcements from their own country nor escape to it. Confounded by the death of their king, they were easily overcome. All who were on this side the Jordan—ten thousand in number—were destroyed; not one escaped. This deliverance secured for Israel a repose of eighty years, terminating in the year B.C. 1426, being 182 years after the passage of the Jordan.

At or towards the end of this period of eighty years, a first attempt was made by the Philistines to bring the southern tribes under their yoke. But they were unable to accomplish their design, having been repulsed on their first advance, with the loss of six hundred men, by Shamgar and other husbandmen, who fought with ox-goads, being then employed in the cultivation of the fields.

From the manner in which Shamgar is mentioned in the regular narrative, it does not appear whether he took any part in the administration of affairs: but from the notice which is taken of "the days of Shamgar" in the song of Deborah, it is probable that he did. Dr. Hales thinks the term of his administration was included in the eighty years, and that his government in the west was contemporary, in part, with that of Ehud in the east. But in the absence of other positive information, it may be safe to prefer the statement of Josephus, who says that Shamgar *succeeded* Ehud, but died in the first year of his administration.

It is about this time that the story of **Ruth,** which occupies a separate book in the Hebrew Scriptures, is placed by Usher and other chronologers. Being episodical, and only slightly connected with the historical narrative, we cannot follow the details of this beautiful story; but the intimations of the state of society, and of the manners and ideas of the times, which it contains, are, even historically, of too much importance to be overlooked.

The scene of the principal part of the story is in Bethlehem of Judah, which has been several times mentioned in the course of this chapter.

A famine in the land drives an inhabitant of this town, with his wife and two sons, to the land of Moab, which, in consequence of the victories under Ehud, seems to have been at this time in some sort of subjection to the Israelites. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's Naomi, and the sons were called Mahlon and Chilion. The woman lost her husband and two sons in the land of Moab, but the childless wives of her sons, who had married in that land, remained with her. One was called Orpah, and the other Ruth. At the end of ten years, Naomi determined to return home, but, with beautiful disinterestedness, exhorted the widows of her two sons to remain in their own land with their well-provided friends, and not go to be partakers of her destitution. Orpah accordingly remained: but nothing could overcome the devoted attachment of Ruth to the mother of her lost husband. To the really touching representations of Naomi, her still more touching reply was, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." This strong and unmistakeable expression of most beautiful and true affections, could not be repelled by Naomi. They took their homeward way together.

It was barley harvest when Naomi and Ruth arrived at Bethlehem. Ruth, anxious to provide in any little way for their joint subsistence, soon bethought herself of going

forth to seek permission to glean in some harvest field. It happened that the field where she asked and obtained this permission, from the overseer of the reapers, belonged to Boaz, a person of large possessions in these parts. Boaz himself came in the course of the day, to view the progress of the harvest. He greeted his reapers, "Jehovah be with you;" and they answered him, "Jehovah bless thee." His attention was attracted towards Ruth, and he inquired concerning her of his overseer, who told him that this was "The Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab," and related how she had applied for leave to glean after the reapers. Boaz then himself accosted her, and kindly charged her not to go elsewhere, but to remain in his fields, and keep company with his maidens till the harvest was over. He had enjoined his young men not to molest her. If she were athirst she might go and drink freely from the vessels of water provided for the use of the reapers. Ruth was astonished at all this kindness, and fell at his feet, expressing her thanks and her surprise that he should take such kind notice of a stranger. But he said, "It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy work: and a full reward be given to thee from Jehovah, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." She answered, "Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

When the meal-time of the harvest people came round, Boaz invited her to draw near and eat of the bread, and dip her morsel in the vinegar with them. He also handed her some new corn parched, which was considered rather a luxury, and therefore Ruth reserved part of it for Naomi.

All these little incidents, beautifully descriptive of the innocent old customs of harvest time, bring strongly before the mind

[Harvest.]

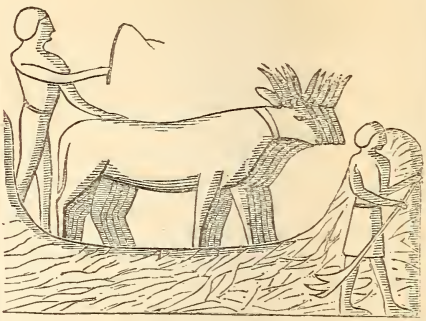
of one who has studied the antiquities of Egypt, the agricultural scenes depicted in the grottos of Eleithuias, in which so many of the usages of Egyptian agriculture are represented. There we see the different processes of cutting with the reaping hook, and of plucking up the stalks; gleaners; water refrigerating in porous jars (placed on stands) for the refreshment of the reapers; the reapers quenching their thirst; and women bearing away the vessels in which drink has been brought to them at their labour.

When Ruth returned home in the evening with the result of her day's gleaning—an ephah of barley—Naomi was anxious to know how it happened that her labours had been so prosperous: and when she heard the name of Boaz, she remarked that he was a near kinsman of the family; and advised that, according to his wish, Ruth should confine her

gleaning to his fields. So Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz, until the end not only of the barley, but of the wheat harvest.

When the harvest was over, Naomi, who was anxious for the rest and welfare of the good and devoted creature who had been more than a daughter to her, acquainted her with what had lately engaged her thoughts. She said that Boaz was so near of kin that he came under the operation of the levirate law, which required that when a man died childless, his next of kin should marry the widow, in order that the first child born from this union should be counted as the son of the deceased, and inherit as his heir. It was, therefore, no less her duty than a circumstance highly calculated to promote her welfare, that Boaz should be reminded of the obligation which devolved upon him. But as it was not wished to press the matter upon him, if he were averse to it, it was necessary that the claim should, in the first instance, be privately made. In such a case, Ruth, a stranger very imperfectly acquainted with the laws and habits of the Israelites, could only submit herself to Naomi's guidance. She told Ruth that Boaz was engaged in winnowing his barley in the threshing floor; which, of course, was nothing more than a properly levelled place in the open air. Naomi conjectured he would rest there at night, and told Ruth to mark the spot to which he withdrew, and advance to claim

[Winnowing Corn in the Threshing Floor.]



[Threshing Corn by the Treading of Oxen]

the protection he was bound to render. All happened as Naomi had foreseen. Boaz, after he had supped, withdrew to sleep at the end of the heap of corn; and after he had lain down, Ruth advanced and placed herself at his feet: and when he awoke at midnight, and with much astonishment, asked who she was, she answered, "I am Ruth, thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." Those who, measuring all things by their own small and current standards, regard as improper or indelicate this procedure of one

'Who feared no evil, for she knew no sin,'

need only hear the answer of Boaz to be satisfied. "Blessed be thou, of Jehovah, my daughter . . . . And now, my daughter, fear not: . . . . for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." He added, however, that there was a person in the town more nearly related to her deceased husband; and on him properly the levirate duty devolved: but if *he* declined it, then it fell to himself, and he would certainly undertake it. It being too late for Ruth to return home, Boaz desired her to remain in the threshing-floor for the night. Early in the morning he dismissed her, after having filled her veil with corn to take to Naomi.

In those times, and long after, it was customary to transact all business of a public nature and to administer justice in the gates. When there was little se of written

documents, this gave to every transaction the binding obligation which the presence of many witnesses involved; and thus also justice was easily and speedily administered among the people, at the hours when they passed to and fro between the fields and the city. And such hours were, for this reason, those at which the judges and elders gave their attendance in the gates.

Boaz therefore went up to the gate; and requested ten of the elders, there present, to sit down with him as witnesses of what was to take place. When the "near kinsman" passed by, he called him to sit down with them. He then questioned him as to his willingness "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." This he was not willing to do, lest he should "mar his own inheritance;" and therefore he was glad to relinquish his prior claim to Boaz, which he did by the significant action of drawing off his own shoe and giving it to him. This action was usual in all transactions of this nature, and it may well be interpreted by the familiar idiom which would express Boaz as being made, by this act and with reference to this particular question, *to stand in the shoes* of the person who had transferred to him his rights and duties. Boaz then declared all the people there present at the gate to be witnesses of this transfer, and they responded, "We are witnesses." After this Boaz took Ruth to be his wife; and the fruit of this union was Obed, the grandfather of David.

From the repose which this narrative offers, one turns reluctantly to renewed scenes of war, oppression, and wrong.

It may be doubted that the authority—such as it was—of any of the judges extended over all the tribes. Hardly any of the oppressions to which the Israelites were subject appear to have been general, and in most cases the authority of the judge appears to have been confined to the tribes he had been instrumental in delivering from their oppressors. There is, for instance, not the least reason to suppose that the authority of Ehud extended over the northern tribes, which had not been affected by the oppression of the Moabites, from which he delivered the south and east. The eighty years of good conduct which followed this deliverance, is therefore only to be understood as exhibited by the tribes which were then delivered. The northern tribes, and in some degree those of the centre and the west, were meanwhile falling into those evil practices, from which it was necessary that distress and sorrow should bring them back. And therefore they were distressed.

The northern Canaanites had, in the course of time, recovered from the effects of that great overthrow which they sustained in the time of Joshua. A new Jabin, reigning like his predecessor in Hazor, by the lake Merom, rose into great power. His general, Sisera, was an able and successful warrior; and his powerful military force contained not fewer than 900 of those iron-armed chariots of war which the Israelites regarded with so much dread. With such a force he was enabled, for the punishment of their sins, to reduce the northern tribes to subjection, and hold them tributary. Considering the character of the power which now prevailed over them, there is reason to conclude that this was the severest of all the oppressions to which Israel had hitherto been subject. The song of Deborah conveys some intimations of their miserable condition. The villages and open homesteads, which were continually liable to be pillaged, and the inhabitants insulted and wronged by the Canaanites, were deserted throughout the land, and the people found it necessary to congregate in the walled towns. Travelling was unsafe; in consequence of which the highways were deserted, and those who were obliged to go from one place to another found it necessary to journey in bye-roads and unfrequented paths. At the places to which it was necessary to resort for water, they were waylaid and robbed, wounded, or slain: and, to crown all, they were disarmed; among 40,000 in Israel, a shield or spear was not to be found. The details of this picture are exactly such as are offered by the condition of any oppressed or subjugated population, at this day, in the East. The government itself may be content with its tribute; but it will be obliged to wink at because unable to prevent, the far greater

grievances, the exactions, robberies, insults, woundings, deaths, to which the people are subjected by the inferior officers of government, by bands of licentious soldiers, and by an adverse and triumphant populace,—all of whom look upon them as their prey and spoil, as things made only to be trampled on. Such oppression the Israelites endured for twenty years. They then remembered that, to them, trouble was the punishment of sin; and that there was One able and willing to deliver them, if they would but turn themselves unto Him. They did turn, and their deliverance was certain from that hour.

In those days a pious and able woman, well acquainted with the divine law, became an important person in Israel. Her name was Deborah, and she abode under a palm-tree in the southern part of Ephraim. Her high character for piety and wisdom occasioned the Israelites to resort to her for counsel and for justice; and it is not unlikely that her salutary influence contributed to move the people to that repentance which prepared the way for their deliverance. When their punishment had thus wrought its intended object, the Divine King made known to the prophetess his intention to deliver the house of Israel from its bondage; but seeing that she, as a woman, could not personally lead the Israelites to battle, she sent to a person of the tribe of Naphtali, named Barak, and communicated to him the instructions she had received. These were, that he should bring together, at Mount Tabor, 10,000 men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and with them give battle to the forces of King Jabin. Barak, being fully aware of the difficulty of assembling and arming a respectable force, and recollecting the greatness of that power he was to oppose, rather shrunk from the enterprise. He, however, offered to undertake it, if Deborah would afford him the benefit of her influential presence, but not else. She consented; but, to rebuke the weakness of his faith, she prophesied that Sisera—the redoubted captain of King Jabin's host—should not be slain in fight with him, or be taken captive by him, but should fall by a woman's hand.

They went into the north together, and the required number of men from Naphtali and Zebulun readily obeyed their call, and marched to Mount Tabor. These two tribes had probably been selected on the ground that they were likely to engage more readily in this service, in consequence of their vicinity to the metropolitan seat of the oppressive power having rendered the yoke of servitude more galling and irritating to them than to the other tribes.

As soon as Jabin's general, Sisera, heard of the Hebrew force assembled on Mount Tabor, he brought forth his 900 chariots, and assembled his whole army, not doubting to surround and cut in pieces a body of men so comparatively small. The Hebrews were, in general, much afraid of war-chariots, to drawn battles in open plains they were unaccustomed, and the disparity of numbers was in this instance very great. Yet, encouraged by the assurances of victory which Deborah conveyed, Barak did not await the assault of Sisera, but marched his men down from the mountain into the open plain, and fell impetuously upon the adverse host. In Oriental warfare the result of the first shock usually decides the battle, and the army is lost which then gives way, or has its ranks broken. So it was now. At the first shock, the vast army of Sisera was seized with a panic terror. The soldiers threw away their arms, and sought only how they might escape; while the chariots drawn by terrified horses, impeded the retreat of the fugitives, and added to the confusion and the loss. The carnage among the Canaanites was horrible; and, besides those who perished by the sword, vast numbers of them were swept away by the sudden overflow of the river Kishon. Sisera himself fled in his chariot across the plain of Esdraelon; but, fearing that his chariot rendered him too conspicuous, he dismounted and continued his flight on foot. At last he came to a nomade encampment, belonging to Heber the Kenite, one of the descendants of those of the family and clan of Jethro, who, with the brother-in-law of Moses, entered the land of Canaan with the Israelites, and enjoyed the privilege of pasturing their

flocks in its plains. Heber was from home, but his wife knew the illustrious fugitive, and offered him the protection of her tent. This, as the Kenites had been neutral in the war, Sisera did not hesitate to accept. He knew that the tent of a Bedouin, and especially the woman's portion of it, was a sanctuary, which the owner would sooner perish than allow to be violated, and that infamy worse than death awaited him who allowed injury to befall the guest or fugitive who was admitted to its shelter. Being athirst, Sisera asked for water; but instead of this, she gave him sour milk—the best beverage an Arab tent contains, and the refreshing qualities of which are well known to those who have travelled in the East. This, with his fatigue, disposed Sisera to sleep. As he slept, the thought occurred to Jael (that was the woman's name) that the greatest enemy of the now victorious Israelites lay helpless before her; and that it was in her power to win great favour from the victors, by anticipating the almost certain death which awaited the chief captain of Jabin's host. Having no weapon, she took a mallet and one of the long nails by which the tent cords are fastened to the ground, and stealing softly to the place where he lay, she smote the nail into his temple, pinning his head to the ground. Barak, passing that way soon after, in pursuit, was called in by Jael, and he beheld the redoubted Sisera dead at his feet—slain ignominiously by a woman's hand. He might then have pondered whether, had Sisera been the victor and himself the fugitive, the same fate might not have been his own. When we reflect that "there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite," and that it was in the knowledge that he deserved no wrong at *their* hands, that Sisera accepted the shelter which Jael offered; and when, moreover, we consider that the emir, Jael's husband, had no interest in the result, save that of standing well with the victorious party, it will be difficult to find any other motive than that which we have assigned—the desire to win the favour of the victors—for an act so grossly opposed to all those notions of honour among tent-dwellers on which Sisera had relied for his safety. It was a most treacherous and cruel murder, wanting all those extenuations which were applicable to the assassination of king Eglon by Ehud.

The time is gone by when commentators or historians might venture to justify this deed. Our extended acquaintance with the East enables us to know that those Orientals whose principles would allow them to applaud the act of Ehud, would regard with horror the murder, *in his sleep*, of a confiding and friendly guest, to whom the sacred shelter of the tent had been offered. That Deborah, as a prophetess, was enabled to foretel the fall of Sisera by a woman's hand, does not convey the Divine sanction of this deed, but only manifests the Divine foreknowledge; and that the same Deborah, in her triumphant song, blesses Jael for this act, only indicates the feeling, in the first excitement of victory, of one who had far more cause to rejoice at the death of Sisera than Jael had to inflict it.

The triumphant song of Deborah has attracted great and deserved attention as a noble "specimen of the perfectly sublime ode." The design of this ode seems to be two-fold, *religious* and *political:* first, to thank God for the recent deliverance of Israel from Canaanitish bondage and oppression; and, next, to celebrate the zeal and alacrity with which some of the tribes volunteered their services against the common enemy; and to censure the lukewarmness and apathy of others who stayed at home, and thus betrayed the public cause; and by this contrast and exposure, to heal those fatal divisions among the tribes which were so injurious to the public weal. It consists of three parts:—1st, the exordium, containing an appeal to past times, where Israel was under the special protection of Jehovah, as compared with their late disastrous condition; next, a recital of the circumstances which preceded and those that accompanied the victory; lastly, a fuller description of the concluding event, the death of Sisera, and the disappointed hopes of his mother for his triumphant return. The admired conclusion is thus:—

"The mother of Sisera gazed through the window,
Through the lattice she, lamenting, cried,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming*?
Wherefore linger the steps of his steeds?'
Her wise ladies answered their mistress,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,—
'Have they not sped, and are dividing the spoil?
To every chief man a damsel or two?
To Sisera a spoil of various colours,
A spoil of various-coloured embroidery,
A spoil of various-coloured embroideries for the neck.'—
So let thine enemies perish, O Jehovah!
But let they who love thee become
As the sun going forth in his strength."

From the animadversions which this ode contains, it is easy to collect that only those tribes which were actually subject to the oppression, and even only those on which the oppression the most heavily fell, were willing to disturb themselves by engaging in warlike operations against the oppressor. It does not appear that the southern tribes and the tribes beyond Jordan were directly affected by the subjugation of the northern tribes; and even of those under tribute, the tribes more remote from the seat of king Jabin seem to have been more at ease than the others. All these were loth to come forward on this occasion; and, in general, we find that, among the Hebrews of this early period, there was little, if any, of that high-spirited and honourable abhorrence of a foreign yoke, which is, under God, the surest safeguard of a nation's independence. It was not the yoke itself they hated, but its physical weight upon their shoulders; and that weight must be very heavy before they could be roused to any great effort to shake it from them. The iron which entered their souls in Egypt still rusted there.

These sectional divisions—or rather this want of a general and sympathising union among the several members of the house of Israel—was the obvious secondary cause of the miseries and oppressions under which different portions of that great body did from time to time fall; and this disunion itself was the natural and inevitable result of the neglect of the law, as a whole, and especially of those provisions which were, in their proper operation, admirably calculated to keep the tribes united together as one nation. It would be ridiculous to say that the theocratic policy was a failure. That which was not fairly and fully tried cannot be said to fail. Ruin to the people did not come from the system itself: and that ruin did come from the neglect of its conditions, rather shows how well that system was calculated to form a happy and united people.

The victory of Deborah and Barak over Sisera gave to Israel a long repose from the aggressions of the nations west of the Jordan; for although their peace began again to be disturbed after forty years (in 1336 B.C.), the invasion was then from the *east*.

At the latter end of the forty years which followed the victory over Sisera, the Israelites had again relapsed into their evil and idolatrous habits. This was particularly the case of the tribes beyond Jordan, whose repose had been of longer duration than that of the western tribes, for it does not appear that the oppressions of king Jabin had extended to them.

Their punishment was this time particularly heavy, and came from an unexpected quarter. The pastoral tribes dwelling on the borders of the land, and in the eastern deserts — the Midianites, Amalekites, with other tribes of Arabia—came swarming into the land "like locusts," with countless flocks and herds, and pitching their tents in the plains and valleys. Arriving by the time the products of the soil began to be gathered in, they remained until the final ingatherings of the year, when the advance of winter warned them to withdraw into their deserts. Thus their cattle grew fat upon the rich pastures of the land, while those of Israel were starved; and the men themselves lived merrily upon the grain which the Hebrews had sowed, and upon the fruits which they had cultivated: and as, besides this deprivation of the sustenance for which they had laboured, such lawless crews are always ready for any kind of great or small robbery and exaction, the Israelites were obliged to

* The original is highly figurative; *Why is his chariot ashamed to come?*

abandon the open country, and to resort to the walled towns, to entrench themselves in strongholds, and even to seek the shelter of the caves among the mountains. Even those who ventured to remain in occupation of their own allotments, were afraid to have it known that they had in their possession any of the produce of their own fields. All this while it does not appear that there was any open war, or any military operations. The invaders bore all before them, and had entirely their own way, by the mere force of the intimidating impressions which their numbers created. Countries or districts bordering on the desert are still subject to similar visitations, where the local government is not strong enough to prevent them, or where the pre-occupation of the border soil by Arabs in the state of semi-cultivators, does not form an obstacle (as it does not so always) to the incursions of pure Bedouins. Down to a very recent date the very country east of the Jordan, which suffered the most on the present occasion, suffered much from the periodical sojourn and severe exactions of the Bedouin tribes.

These incursions of the Midianites were repeated for seven years. By this time the oppression had become so heavy that the Israelites, finding by bitter experience the insufficiency of all other help, cried to Him who had delivered them of old: their cry was heard. A prophet was commissioned to point out to them that their disobedience had been the cause of their sufferings, and to give to them the promise of a new deliverance.

The hero this time appointed to act for the deliverance of Israel, was Gideon of Manasseh. His family was exposed to the general suffering occasioned by the presence of the Bedouin tribes,—so much so, that having retained possession of some corn, they dared not thresh it out for the use in the ordinary threshing-floor, but, to conceal it from the knowledge or suspicion of the invaders, were obliged to perform this operation silently and secretly, in so unusual a place as the vineyard, near the wine-press. The threshing-floors were watched by the Midianites at this time, when the harvests had been gathered in; but no regard was paid to the vineyards, as the season of ripe grapes was far off. Gideon was engaged in this service when "the angel of Jehovah" appeared to him standing under an oak which grew there. When apprised of his vocation to deliver Israel, the modest husbandman would have excused himself on the ground of his wanting that eminence of station which so important a service appeared to demand; and when silenced by the emphatic "I will be with thee" from his heavenly visitant, he still sought to have some certain tokens whereby he might feel assured, and be enabled to convey the assurance to others, that his call was indeed from God. Accordingly, a succession of signal miracles were wrought to satisfy his mind, and to confirm his faith. The refection of kid's-flesh and bread, which the hospitable Gideon quickly got ready for the stranger, was as he directed, laid upon a rock before him, and when he touched it with the end of his staff, a spontaneous fire arose by which it was consumed, as a sacrifice, and at the same time the stranger disappeared. After this, at the special desire of Gideon, "a sign" of his own choosing was granted to him. A fleece which he laid upon the threshing-floor (in the open air) was saturated with dew, while the soil around was all dry; and again, condescending to his prayer, the Lord was pleased to reverse this miracle, by exempting the fleece alone from the dewy moisture which bespread the ground: Gideon was satisfied.

Yet the family from which the deliverer was chosen, was not less tainted by the sins than visited by the punishments of Israel; for Joash, the father of Gideon, had erected an altar to Baal, at Ophrah, the town of his residence, at which the people of that place rendered their idolatrous services to that idol. This altar Gideon was directed to destroy, and in its place to erect, over the rock on which his offering had been consumed, an altar to Jehovah. It would seem that Joash himself was brought back to his fealty to Jehovah by the first of the miracles we have related, of which, probably, Gideon was not the sole witness: for when the men

of Ophrah, early in the following morning, arose to render their worship to Baal, and, finding his altar overthrown, demanded the death of Gideon, his father stood forward to vindicate his conduct. He undauntedly retorted the sentence of death against the idolaters themselves, for their apostasy from Jehovah. By demanding the punishment of Gideon for his act against Baal, they recognised in fact the fairness of the punishments denounced by the law against those individuals or cities which turned away from Jehovah to serve other gods; and this, coupled with the derision of Joash at the impotency of Baal to vindicate or avenge his own cause, so wrought upon the people of that place, that they were among the foremost to gather to him when he sounded the trumpet of war. He then sent messengers throughout his own tribe of Manasseh (on both sides the Jordan), as well as through those of Asher, Naphtali, and Zebulon. And so cheerfully was the call obeyed that Gideon soon found himself at the head of 32,000 men. With this force Gideon marched to the mountains of Gilboa, where he found vast multitudes of the enemy encamped before him in the plain of Esdraelon. This fine plain had probably been before their favourite resort; but they seem to have congregated there in unusual numbers as soon as they heard of Gideon's preparations. And now that the people might have no cause to attribute their deliverance to their own numbers and prowess, it pleased the Divine King of Israel to reduce this important army to a mere handful of spirited men. In the first place Gideon was directed to proclaim liberty for all who now, in sight of the enemy, were "fearful and afraid," to return to their own homes. This proclamation, according to the law*, ought in all cases to have been made; but it seems that from some reason or other (perhaps either from ignorance of the law, or from supposing that it was not intended to apply to such a case as the present), it would not have been made by Gideon without the special command which he received. Such a law, or practice, however inapplicable, or even ruinous it might prove under the military systems and tactics of modern Europe, was well calculated to act beneficially in the warfare of those early times; for as everything then depended on the individual courage and prowess of those engaged, the faint-hearted were more likely to damage than assist those on whose side they appeared; as their conduct was tolerably certain to bring about results favourable to themselves, and discouraging to their more valorous companions. In the present instance the result was, that, although the men composing the army of Gideon had come forward voluntarily, above two-thirds of them were so intimidated in the actual presence of danger, that they took advantage of this permission to depart to their own homes. Of the 32,000, only 10,000 remained with Gideon. Yet as these were men of valour, as evinced by their determination to remain, room for vain-glorious boastings was still left, and therefore Gideon was informed that the number was still too large, and that a further reduction must be made. The process of this second selection was very curious. All those were dismissed who, in drinking at the watering-place, stooped down to drink in large draughts of water at the surface; but those who merely "lapped" the water, or took it up in the hollow of their hands to drink, were retained. The different methods of drinking has been supposed to have distinguished the self-indulgent from the more manly and active men. The latter—those who took up the water in their hollowed hands—were but 300 out of the 10,000; and these were declared sufficient for the enterprise.

The night after this, Gideon, with his faithful follower Phurah, went down to the camp of the enemy, in consequence of an intimation that he would there hear matter for his encouragement. What he heard was one soldier, just awakened, telling a dream to his companions. He had dreamed that he saw a barley-cake roll down from the hills to the Midianitish camp, where it overthrew the first tent to which it came. The interpretation which the other gave was:—"This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his

* Deut. xx. 8.

hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host."

Several facts are indicated by this incident; such as the stress generally laid upon dreams in that age, as indicative of contingent results,—the honour attached to the office of spy, as one of danger, and which was, therefore, as in the Mosaic age, assigned to, or undertaken by the very chief persons in the army,—and the truly oriental want of sentinels and pickets, even in the face of the enemy. This indeed may have been noticed on many former occasions; and to this astonishing neglect of a precaution which seems to us so obvious and so simple, may be attributed the facility and success of those sudden surprises of which we so often read in the military history of those early ages.

Gideon no sooner heard the dream and its interpretation than he understood and accepted the sign. He returned to his own small band, and proceeded to carry into immediate execution a remarkable stratagem which had already been suggested to him. He divided his 300 men into three companies. Every man was provided with a trumpet in one hand, and in the other a pitcher containing a lighted lamp. They were then stationed in silence and darkness at different points on the outside of the enemy's camp. Then, on a signal given by Gideon all the three companies, at the same instant, blew their trumpets, exposed their lamps, broke the pitchers which had concealed them, and then continued shouting, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!"* The terrible din and crash which thus suddenly broke in upon the stillness of midnight, with the equally sudden blaze of light from three hundred lamps, which illumined its darkness, struck an instant panic into the vast host of Midian, suggesting to them that the lamp-bearing trumpeters (whose numbers must have been greatly magnified in the confused apprehension of men just awakened) were but the advanced guard of the Hebrew host whom they were lighting to the attack on the camp. They therefore fled in all directions, through the openings between the three companies. In their midnight flight, not doubting that the Hebrews had fallen upon them, they mistook friends for foes, and vast multitudes of them perished by each other's swords. The survivors, in their further flight, came up with the several parties which had been dismissed by Gideon to their homes, and these committed a terrible slaughter among the fugitives. Gideon also sent messengers desiring the Ephraimites to seize the various fords of the Jordan, between the two lakes, and thereby prevent the escape of any of the fugitives eastward, which was the direction they would naturally take. In this terrible overthrow no less than 120,000 of the various tribes of "the children of the east" perished; and so completely were the Midianites subdued that from that time "they lifted up their heads no more."

A remnant of 15,000, headed by their emirs, Zebah and Zalmunna, managed to escape across the river (probably before the Ephraimites had seized the fords), and having reached a distance where they deemed themselves safe from further pursuit, they ventured to encamp. But Gideon himself, with his faithful 300, continued the pursuit even to that distance—even into the land of the tent-dwellers—and falling suddenly upon the camp, which lay carelessly secure, the already scared Midianites were completely overthrown. The two emirs themselves were taken alive and brought before Gideon. He had formed, for those times, the singularly generous intention to spare their lives; but when he gathered, from their own lips, that they had created a case of blood-revenge between himself and them, by putting to death, near Mount Tabor, his brethren, "*the sons of his own mother*," he, as the legal avenger of their blood, slew these emirs with his own hand.

Gideon seems to have been a man eminently qualified for the high and difficult station to which he was called. Firm even to sternness, where the exhibition of the stronger qualities seemed necessary, and in war "a mighty man of valour,"—we are

* The hint of this watchword was taken from the interpretation of the Midianitish soldier's dream, "the sword of Gideon," to which Gideon, with eq al piety and modesty, prefixed, "the sword of Jehovah."

called upon in his case, more frequently than in any other which has occurred, to admire his truly courteous and self-retreating character, and that nice and difficult tact—difficult, because spontaneously *natural*—in the management of men, which is a rarer and finer species of judgment, and by which he was intuitively taught to say the properest word, and do the properest deed at the most proper time. This is the true secret of his ultimate popularity and influence, which much exceeded that enjoyed by any judge before him. Some instances of the qualities which we have indicated have already appeared, and others will presently occur.

The Ephraimites who had guarded the Jordan, having performed all that their duty required, hastened to join Gideon in the pursuit of the Midianites. They met him on his return, and laid before him the heads of Oreb and Zeeb*, two emirs of Midian whom they had taken and slain. This tribe of Ephraim, which was, after that of Judah, the most important in Israel, was exceedingly jealous of its superiority; and was therefore not a little annoyed that an obscure Abiezrite should have undertaken so great an enterprise as that now happily completed, without consulting them. They now took occasion to remonstrate with him sharply on the subject, but were soon pacified by his modest and good-tempered answer. "What have I done now in comparison with you?" he said. "Is not *the gleaning* of the grapes of Ephraim better than *the vintage* of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb; and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" Gideon knew what Solomon taught long after, "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

When he had crossed the Jordan in pursuit of the fugitives, he was anxious to obtain for his small band—"faint, yet pursuing"—refreshments from the town of Succoth, which he passed, and afterwards from that of Penuel; but he was in both cases refused. The inhabitants seem to have been fearful of bringing upon themselves the vengeance of the Midianites, to whom they had for seven years been subject, and against whom they held it to be very unlikely that he would succeed with so small a force. They not only refused, but added insult to injury. Instead of chastising them on the spot, he coolly told both that he would do so on his return; and he now kept his promise. Coming upon Succoth by surprise, before the sun was up, he took the chief persons of Succoth, and, as he had threatened, scourged them to death with thorns and briars. Of Penuel he made a still severer example, for he beat down the fortress-tower of that city, and put to death the men belonging to it.

The Israelites, in the warmth of their gratitude, offered to make Gideon their king, and to continue the crown to his descendants. This proposal, which clearly shows how unmindful the Israelites had become of the great political principle of the theocracy, with which they were so unwarrantably ready to dispense, was nobly rejected by Gideon, who replied to it in the true spirit of the theocracy,—"I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: JEHOVAH shall rule over you." But while thus alive to the true political character of the Mosaic institutions, he was not equally cognisant of the religious obligations of that system. When he was called to his great work at Ophrah, he had been instructed to build an altar on the rock on which his offering had been accepted, and himself to offer sacrifices there. This probably led him to conclude that it would be right to form a religious establishment at that spot, for the worship of God by sacrifice. A more perfect acquaintance with the principles of the law would have taught him otherwise. However, to this object he applied the produce of the golden ear-rings of the Midianites, which, at his special request (not unlike that of Aaron, Exod. xxxii. 2), were cheerfully granted to him by the army as his share of the spoil. The weight being 1700 shekels, the gold thus obtained must have been worth upwards of 3000*l.* of our money; and

* The names mean Crow and Wolf. It would seem that the chiefs of the Midianites (like the North American Indians) took the names of animals, as significant of qualities to which they aspired.

the "ephod" which he is described as having made with it, probably included not only "the priests' dress," as the word signifies, but a regular sacerdotal establishment in his own town, where sacrifices might be constantly offered. For this purpose such a sum as he applied to it must have been fully requisite. It has been disputed whether Gideon himself officiated as priest, or, like Micah, engaged a Levite for that purpose. The latter seems the more likely supposition, unless, from having been once directed to offer sacrifice, Gideon concluded he had a superior claim to discharge that office.

However well intended this establishment may have been in the first instance, this was a most mistaken and dangerous step, resembling, in its principle, the establishment which the Danites had formed in the north. It infringed upon the peculiar claims of Shiloh, the seat of the Divine Presence; and the result of these and all attempts to form separate establishments affords ample illustration of the design with which the formal worship of God by sacrifice was confined to one particular locality. It proved "a snare unto Gideon and his house," in worshipping the true God in an improper manner. It became popular to "all Israel," who resorted to Ophrah to render that worship and service which was due only at the sacred tabernacle; and, with the predisposition to idolatry, it is not wonderful that, free at this place from the restraint and supervision which the worship at Shiloh imposed, the service at this place soon became associated with idolatrous ideas and objects, until at last it degenerated into rank idolatry after the death of Gideon. He survived and ruled Israel forty years after his victory over the Midianites, and during all this time the tranquillity of Israel appears to have been undisturbed.

CHAPTER III.

FROM GIDEON TO SAMSON.

Gideon left no less than seventy sons by his numerous wives, besides one spurious son called Abimelech, by a concubine (whom Josephus calls Drumah) who belonged to Shechem. A bastard among seventy legitimate sons was not likely to be pleasantly circumstanced when his father was dead, and it is not surprising that he soon withdrew from among them to his mother's relations at Shechem. They seem to have been persons of some consideration in that place.

After the death of Gideon, the history, without stating the fact, seems to require us to suppose that his sons had been invited to take the government, or to share it among them; and that they, actuated by the same noble, because disinterested, regard for the principles of the theocracy which had influenced their father, had declined the offer. But Abimelech, a bold bad man, was of a different spirit. He soon saw the advantage which he might take of the existing posture of affairs. Prompted by him, his uncles and other maternal connections suggested to the chief people of Shechem his willingness to undertake the charge which the people generally were anxious to see in the hands of a son, or some of the sons, of Gideon. They suggested whether it were not much better that one man should reign over them, than that they should be subject to all the sons of Gideon, seventy persons in number; and if the government of one man was to be desired, who had so strong a claim to *their* preference and attachment as one so closely connected with them as Abimelech? These suggestions had their weight upon the leading men of Shechem, particularly the consideration that he was their "brother." They supplied him with money out of the treasury of Baal-berith, whose worship seems to have been that to which the Israelites

were at this time the most inclined. The sum was not large*, but it served him to hire a set of unprincipled men, prepared for any undertaking he might propose. And, with the usual short-sightedness of wicked men, thinking to concentrate in his own person the attachment of the Israelites to the house of Gideon, as well as to extinguish that which was likely to be the most active opposition he would have to encounter, Abimelech marched his troop to Ophrah, where he put to death all his brethren, the sons of Gideon, with the exception of the youngest, named Jotham, who managed to escape. This is the first example of a stroke of barbarous policy which has since been very common in the history of the east. In the first instance it had the effect he intended, for on his return to Shechem the people of that place assembled and anointed Abimelech king, close to a pillar of stone that stood near that town, perhaps the same which Joshua had set up there as a memorial of the covenant with God.

When Jotham was made acquainted with this, he repaired secretly to the neighbourhood of Shechem, and taking advantage of some festival which brought the inhabitants together outside the town, he appeared suddenly on a cliff overlooking the valley in which they were assembled, and, in a loud voice, called their attention to his words. He then delivered that earliest and very fine parable, which represents the trees as making choice of a king:—The olive refused to leave its oil, the fig-tree its sweetness, and the vine-tree its wine, to reign over the trees (thus intimating the refusal of Gideon's sons); but the upstart bramble (representing Abimelech) accepts, with great dignity, the offered honour, and even proposes the conditions of its acceptance. These are exquisitely satirical, both in their terms and in their application—"If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come, and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." That they might be at no loss to understand his meaning, Jotham gave the obvious moral, in which he included a bitter rebuke of the ingratitude of the people to their deliverer, all whose sons, save himself, they had slain; together with an intimation, which proved prophetic, of the probable result. He then fled with all haste, in fear of Abimelech; and ultimately settled beyond his reach, at Beer, in the tribe of Benjamin.

Abimelech reigned three years in Shechem, during which he so disgusted the men by whom he had been raised to that bad eminence on which he stood, that they expelled him from their city. In return, he, with the aid of the desperate fellows who remained with him, did his utmost to distress the inhabitants, so that at the season of vintage they were afraid to go out into their vineyards to collect their fruits. Hearing of these transactions, one Gaal went over to Shechem with his armed followers and kinsmen, to see how they might be turned to his advantage. We know not precisely who this person was, or whence he came; but there are circumstances in the original narrative which would suggest that he was a Canaanite, descended from the former rulers of Shechem, and that his people also were a remnant of the original Shechemites. He came so opportunely, that the people very gladly accepted his protection during the vintage. In the feasts which followed the joyful labours of that season, Gaal, who seems to have been a cowardly, boasting fellow, spoke contemptuously of Abimelech, and talked largely of what he could and would do, if authority were vested in him. This was heard with much indignation by Zebul, one of the principal magistrates of the city, who lost no time in secretly sending to apprise Abimelech how matters stood, and advised him to show himself suddenly before the city, when he would undertake to induce Gaal to march out against him. Accordingly one morning, when Zebul and other principal persons were with Gaal at the gate of the city, armed men were seen descending the hills. Zebul amused Gaal till they came nearer, and then, by reminding him of

* Seventy shekels of silver, about equal to eight pounds of our money. But proper allowance must be made for a great difference in the real value of money, although the precise amount of that difference cannot be stated.

his recent boastings, compelled him to draw out his men to repel the advance of Abimelech. They met, and no sooner did Gaal see a few of his men fall, than, with the rest, he fled hastily into the city. Zebul availed himself of this palpable exhibition of impotence, if not cowardice, to induce the people of Shechem to expel Gaal and his troop from the town. Abimelech, who was staying at Arumah, a place not far off, was informed of this the next morning, as well as that the inhabitants, although no longer guarded by Gaal, went out daily to the labours of the field. He therefore laid ambushes in the neighbourhood; and when the men were come forth to their work in the vineyards, two of the ambushed parties rose to destroy them, while a third hastened to the gates to prevent their return to the town. The city itself was then taken, and Abimelech caused all the buildings to be destroyed, and the ground to be strewn with salt, as a symbol of the desolation to which his intention consigned it. The fortress, however, still remained, and a thousand men were in it. But they, fancying that it was not tenable, withdrew to the "hold of the house of the Berith," which had the advantage of standing in a more elevated and commanding position. This, it will be noted, is the first temple which we read of in Scripture. On perceiving this, Abimelech cut down the bough of a tree with his battle-axe, and bore it upon his shoulder, directing all his men to do the same. The wood was deposited against the entrance and walls of the strong-hold, and, when kindled, made a tremendous fire, in which the building and the thousand men it contained in it were destroyed.

To follow up this victory, Abimelech marched against Thebez, another revolted town. As before, he took the town itself with little difficulty, but all the people had shut themselves up in the tower or fortress, which offered a more serious obstacle. However, Abimelech advanced to the door with the intention of burning it down, when a woman threw a large stone from the battlements above. It fell upon him, and broke his skull; and mindful, even in that bitter moment, of that principle of military honour which counts death from a woman's hands disgraceful, he hastily called to his armour-bearer to thrust him through with his sword, that it might not be said a woman slew him. But the disgrace which he desired to avoid, attached for ever to his name; for it was always remembered to his dishonour that a woman slew him.

After Abimelech, Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, but dwelling in Mount Ephraim, governed the people for twenty-three years.

He was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite (of eastern Manasseh), who judged Israel twenty-two years. His opulence is indicated by his being the owner of thirty villages, which, collectively, bore the name of Havoth-Jair (Jair's villages), and that he had thirty sons, all of whom he could afford to mount on young asses. In those days horses and mules were not in use among the Hebrews. Their place was not unworthily filled by the fine breed of asses which the country afforded; and to possess as many as thirty of these, young and vigorous, and fit for the saddle (implying the possession of many more, older and of inferior condition), was no questionable sign of wealth.

As the administration of these two judges was peaceable, the notice of them is confined to a few lines; the chief design of the sacred historian being to record the calamities which the Israelites drew upon themselves by their apostacies to the idolatries of the surrounding nations, and their providential deliverances upon their repentance and return to their God and King. After the calm of these administrations, they multiplied their idolatries, and, in punishment for this, they were brought under a servitude to the Ammonites, which continued for eighteen years, and was particularly severe upon the tribes beyond Jordan, although the southern and central tribes on this side the river—Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, were also subdued.

Corrected by calamity, the Israelites put away their idols and cried to God for pardon and deliverance. In reply to their suit, they were reminded of the deliverances which they had already experienced, notwithstand-

ing which they had repeatedly turned to serve other gods. Their prayer was therefore refused; and they were told—"Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let *them* deliver you in the time of your tribulation." Their reply to this was very proper;—"We have sinned: do thou unto us whatever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day." And forthwith they rooted out the remains of idolatry from among them, and worshipped Jehovah with such singleness and zeal that "his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

There was a man called Jephthah, who was, like Abimelech, the spurious son of a man who had a large family of legitimate children. When the father died, the other sons expelled Jephthah from among them, saying, "Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman." As this last phrase generally denotes a foreigner, or one not of Israel, this treatment, although very harsh, was less unjust, under the peculiar circumstances of the Hebrew constitution, than might at the first view appear; for it was a strong point of the Mosaic policy to discourage all connection with foreigners (necessarily idolaters); and nothing was better calculated to this end, for a people like the Hebrews, than the disqualification of the progeny of such connections from receiving a share in the inheritance.

On this Jephthah withdrew into "the land of Tob," towards the borders of the desert: and as he had before this found opportunities of establishing a character for spirit and courage, he was soon joined by a number of destitute and idle young men, who were led by inclination, or more imperative inducements, to prefer the free life he led to the sober habits which a settling community requires. Besides, from pastoral societies, such as those beyond Jordan, the step into the free life of the desert is much shorter than it would be among a more agricultural people. It is really useless to attempt to consider Jephthah's troop otherwise than as a set of daring, careless fellows, acting as men do at the present day act in the east under similar circumstances, and similarly brought together. Being without any other means of subsistence, they unquestionably lived by a sort of robbery, as we should call it now, examples of which are found in all rude states of society, and to which, in such states of society, no one dreams of attaching disgrace. They lived doubtless by *raids*, or plundering excursions, into the neighbouring small states, driving off the cattle, and taking whatever came to their hands; and we may from analogy conclude that they waylaid and levied black-mail upon caravans, when composed of parties which they had no reason to treat with favour. Their point of honour probably was, to abstain from any acts against their own countrymen; and this exception existing, the body of the Israelites must have regarded the performances of Jephthah and his troop with favour, especially if, as is likely, they were thorns in the sides of the Ammonites, and took pleasure to annoy, in their own quarters, the enemies of Israel. However this may be, the courage and conduct of Jephthah became so well known by his successful enterprises, that when, after their repentance, the tribes beyond Jordan determined to make a stand against the Ammonites, but felt the want of a leader, they agreed that there was no known person so fit as Jephthah to lead them to battle. The chiefs of Gilead, his native district, therefore went in person to the land of Tob, to solicit this already celebrated person to undertake the conduct of the expedition. They were rather harshly received. "Did ye not hate me," said the hero, "and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me *now*, when ye are in distress?" They, however, continued to press him, and intimated that, as had been usual in such cases, the government of, at least, the land of Gilead, would be the reward of his success. This was very agreeable to Jephthah, who forthwith accompanied them to Mizpeh, where this agreement was solemnly ratified, and all things necessary for conducting the war were regulated.

By the time Jephthah had organised his forces in Mizpeh, the Ammonites, taking alarm, had assembled a numerous army in

Gilead. Although, from his previous habits of life, we should hardly have expected it from him, we find the Hebrew general commencing the war with much more than usual attention to those formalities which are judged necessary to render the grounds of quarrel manifest. He sent ambassadors to the king of the Ammonites, requiring to know why he had come to fight against the Hebrews in their own land. The king, in reply, alleged that he came to recover the land taken from his ancestors by the Israelites, on their way from Egypt, and of which he, therefore, required peaceable restitution. Jephthah in his reply gave a fair and clear recital of the whole transaction which had put these lands into the possession of the Hebrews, and he refused to surrender them on the following grounds:—1. He denied that the Ammonites had any existing title to the lands, for they had been driven out of these lands by the Amorites before the Hebrews appeared; and that they (the Hebrews) in overcoming and driving out the Amorites, without any assistance from, or friendly understanding with, the Ammonites, became entitled to the territory which the conquered people occupied. 2. That the title of the Israelites was confirmed by a prescription of above 300 years, during which none of Ammon or of Moab had ever reclaimed these lands; and,—3, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, he alleged that the God of Israel was as well entitled to grant his people the lands which they held as was their own god Chemosh, according to their opinion, to grant to the Ammonites the lands which they now occupied. This admirable and well-reasoned statement concluded with an appeal to heaven to decide the justice of the cause by the event of the battle which was now inevitable.

The result was such as might be expected. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites with great slaughter, and reduced the nation to subjection.

But not joy to exalt and gladden his heart, but a bitter grief to rend it deeply, awaited the victor on his return to Mizpeh. Feeling, perhaps, that he had not, like former deliverers, been expressly and publicly called and appointed by God to the work he had undertaken, he had sought to propitiate heaven by a vow, that if allowed to return to his home in peace, whatsoever first came forth to meet him should be offered as a burnt-offering to Jehovah.

Jephthah had no child, save one daughter, a virgin, beautiful and young. And she, when the news came of his great victory, and of his return in triumph and peace, went forth at the head of her fair companions to meet her glorious father, dancing joyously to their timbrels as he drew nigh. Here, then, was the object of his vow—his cherished daughter—the only object in the world which could call forth those kindly sympathies and tendernesses which lurk deep within even those natures which have been the most scarred and roughened in the storms of life. The desolated father rent his clothes, crying, "Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low! . . . for I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back." Then understanding the nature of his vow, that noble maiden, mindful only that Israel was delivered, and impressed with the solemn obligation which that vow imposed, sought not to turn her father from his purpose, or encouraged him to seek those evasions which others have since discovered for him. With unexampled magnanimity she cried, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto Jehovah, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as Jehovah hath taken vengeance for thee upon thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon." All she desired was that she might be allowed for two months to wander among the mountains, with her companions, to bewail that it was not her lot to be a bride and mother in Israel. At the end of that time Jephthah "did with her according to his vow."

It is much to be regretted that the reluctance of the sacred writer to express in plain terms the dreadful immolation which we believe to be thus indicated, has left the whole matter open as a subject of dispute. The early Jewish and Christian writers (including Josephus) made no question that Jephthah, under a most mistaken notion of

duty, did, after the manner of the heathen, really offer his daughter in sacrifice; but the ingenuity of modern criticism has discovered the alternative that she was not immolated on the altar, but was devoted to perpetual virginity in the service of the tabernacle. It must be confessed that the subject is one of such difficulty, as to render it hard to reach a positive conclusion. But on anxiously reconsidering the question which has before engaged our attention *, we are sorry to feel constrained to adhere to the harsher alternative, which we were then led to consider the most probable.

There was no institution among the Jews under which practical effect could be given to the alternative which modern interpretation has provided; and even had not this been the case, there was, at the time that this devotement to the tabernacle must have taken place, no access to the tabernacle from the east; for Jephthah was about that time waging a bitter war with the tribe of Ephraim, in whose territory, at Shiloh, the ark was situated. This posture of affairs would preclude him from receiving from the priests those instructions and remonstrances which would have prevented that piteous immolation which he deemed his vow to require. We are persuaded that the more thoroughly any one makes himself acquainted with the spirit of the time, the state of religion, the nature of the ideas which then prevailed, the peculiarities of the ecclesiastical polity among the Hebrews, and the character of Jephthah himself,—the more strong will be his conviction that the infatuated hero really did offer his daughter in sacrifice, and the greater will the difficulty seem of providing any other alternative. The opinion of the Jews themselves is also entitled to some weight; and at a time when they abhorred the idea of human sacrifices, they not only state it as an unquestionable fact that this sacrifice did take place, but ascribe the deposition of the line of Eleazer from the high-priesthood, and the substitution of that of Ithamar, to the circumstance that the existing pontiff did not take measures to prevent this stain upon the annals of Israel.

We must consider how long the minds of the Israelites had been saturated with notions imbibed from the surrounding heathen, which implies the neglect, and consequent ignorance of the divine law; and that among those ideas and practices that of the superior efficacy of human sacrifices occupied a prominent place. We may also reflect that a rough military adventurer, like Jephthah, had been even more than usually exposed to contaminating influences: such persons are also usually found to be superstitious, and are seldom capable of apprehending more than certain broad and hard features of such higher matters as are presented to their notice. Jephthah knew that human victims were generally regarded as in a peculiar degree acceptable to the gods; and as historical facts are in general more familiarly known than dogmas, it was probably unknown to him that human sacrifices were abhorrent to Jehovah, while he was certain to know that Abraham had been expressly commanded by God himself to offer his beloved Isaac upon the altar; and although the completion of this act was prevented, it would be remembered that the patriarch obtained high praise because he had not withheld even his only and well-loved son from God. That Jephthah made such a vow at all, corroborates the view we take of his character. It was superstitious; and it implies his imperfect knowledge of the law, which would have apprised him of various alternatives which would render the fulfilment of his vow incompatible with obedience to the law. But to such a mind the literal accomplishment of a vow—whatever its purport—will appear the first of duties; and in the fulfilment of such a vow as this, it would seem that the greater his own anguish, the more deeply the iron entered into his own soul, the more meritorious, and the more acceptable to God, the act of the offerer was deemed.

The virgins of Israel instituted an anniversary commemoration of four days, which they spent in celebrating the praises and bewailing the fate of Jephthah's daughter.

The misunderstanding with Ephraim to

* 'Pictorial Bible,' note on Judges xi.

which we have incidentally alluded, was similar to that which the tact of Gideon had averted on a former occasion. That haughty and overbearing tribe had been called to the war in the first instance, but refused to take part in the enterprise; but when that enterprise proved successful, they were astonished and mortified that Israel had been delivered by the Gileadites without their assistance. They then assembled tumultuously, and with many contemptuous and abusive expressions towards the Gileadites in general, and towards Jephthah in particular, they threatened to burn his house over his head, because he had not called them to the last decisive action. The conqueror stated the matter as it actually happened; for his rough nature would not permit him to smooth down their ruffled plumes, as Gideon had done on a similar occasion. And then finding that they were still bent on mischief, he called out the Gileadites, who were highly exasperated at the reflections which had been cast upon them as "fugitives of Ephraim,"—a base breed between Ephraim and Manasseh. A battle took place in which the Ephraimites were signally defeated. They had crossed over to the eastern side of the Jordan, and, after the victory, the Gileadites hastened to seize the fords of that river, to intercept those of the fugitives who attempted to return to their homes. But as Israelites of all the tribes were constantly passing the river, a test was necessary to distinguish the Ephraimites from the others. It is remarkable that the test chosen was that of pronunciation. When any man approached to cross the river, he was asked, "Art thou an Ephraimite?" If he answered "Nay," they said, "Say now *Sh*ibboleth" (water-brooks); but if he were really an Ephraimite, he could not pronounce the *sh*, but gave the word as "*S*ibboleth;" and was slain on the spot. This incident is curious as showing that lingual differences had already arisen by which particular tribes could be distinguished. In like manner a Galilean was, in the time of Christ, known at Jerusalem by his speech. But there is nothing in this out of the usual course. The differences of pronunciation among the several tribes were probably not greater, if as great, as those which the different counties of England offer.

In this disastrous affair the loss of the Ephraimites amounted to 42,000 men. Such a success could be no matter of triumph to the unhappy Jephthah. His troubled life was not long protracted. He died after he had judged Israel six years. B.C. 1247.

After Jephthah follow the names of three judges, the silence of the record concerning whose actions may be understood to indicate a period of tranquillity and ease. These were Ibzan, of Bethlehem in Ephraim, for seven years; Elon, a Zebulonite, for ten years; and Abdon, an Ephraimite, for eight years. Under the repose of these administrations, however, the Hebrews again insensibly relapsed into Idolatry. For this they were brought under a rigorous servitude to their western foes, the Philistines, which [in its full rigour] lasted for forty years. This people had so recruited their strength since the days of Shamgar, that they now take a very conspicuous place in the Hebrew history, forming by far the most powerful and inveterate enemies the Israelites had yet encountered. They continued much longer than any other power had done to wield the weapon by which the iniquities of Israel were chastised; for it was not until the time of David that the deliverance was completed.

When we read of the corrupt state of the nation at large, it would be a grievous error to infer that *all* had departed from God. There are various intimations that, in the worst times, not a few families were to be found religious and well regulated, and which maintained among themselves the faith of the one only God, and followed with exactitude all the requirement of the law. Thus, at a later day, when the prophet deemed that he was himself the only one by whom Jehovah was acknowledged, God himself knew that there were in Israel 7000 persons whose knees had not been bowed to Baal*. But although these were the salt of Israel, they could not preserve the mass from such putrefaction as required that it should be cast forth and trodden under foot.

* 1 Kings xix. 18.

And now, about the same time that the Israelites were cast forth to be trodden under foot by the Philistines, it pleased their offended King, while with the one hand he punished his revolted subjects, to provide with the other for the *beginnings* of their deliverance at a future day. For about that time, the angel of Jehovah appeared to the wife of Manoah, a Danite, who had been barren, and promised her a son, who was to be a Nazarite (a person consecrated to God) from the womb, and that in time he should *begin* to deliver Israel from the yoke of the Philistines.

Accordingly the woman gave birth in due season to a son, on whom the name of Samson was bestowed. As the child grew, it became manifest that the most extraordinary bodily powers had been given to him: while, to prevent undue exaltation of spirit from the consciousness of superior powers, it was known to him that his gifts had no necessary dependence on the physical complication of his thews and sinews, but on his condition as a Nazarite, and on the unshorn hair which formed the sign and symbol of that condition.

It is from the twentieth year of his age, which was also the twentieth of the bondage to the Philistines, that we are to date the commencement of Samson's vindictive administration. He proved to be a man of ungovernable passions; but, through the influence of his destiny to begin the deliverance of Israel, it was so ordered that even his worst passions, and even the sorrows and calamities which these passions wrought upon himself, were made the instruments of distress and ruin to the Philistines.

The fact that the territory occupied by the tribe of Dan, to which Samson belonged, immediately adjoined the country of the Philistines, in consequence of which he became well acquainted with that people, ministered occasion for most of his operations against them. And first—in the Philistine town of Timnath, Samson had seen a young woman with whom he was so well pleased that he resolved to obtain her for his wife. But as such matters were always adjusted between the parents of the respective parties, he went home and desired his father and mother to secure this woman for him. His parents would much have preferred that his choice had fallen on one of the daughters of his own people; but seeing his determination was fixed, they yielded, and went back with him to Timnath. It was on this journey that Samson gave the first recorded indication of the prodigious strength with which he was endowed, by slaying, without any weapon in his hands, a young and fierce lion by which he was assailed.

At Timnath the proposals of his parents were favourably received by the parents of the damsel Samson sought in marriage. It was necessary, by the customs of the time and country, that at least a month should pass between such a proposal and the celebration of the marriage. At the expiration of this time Samson, again accompanied by his parents, went down to Timnath to claim his bride. On the way he turned aside to see what had become of the carcass of the lion he had slain on the former journey. In that climate the carcasses of animals left dead upon the ground are speedily devoured by jackals and vultures, and other beasts and birds which feed on carrion. Even insects contribute largely to this service. Accordingly Samson found only the clean skeleton of the lion, partially covered with the undevoured hide. In the cavity thus formed a swarm of bees had lodged and deposited their honey. At wedding feasts it was at this time usual for the young men then assembled together, to amuse themselves by proposing riddles—those who were unable to solve the riddle incurring a forfeiture to him by whom it was proposed, who himself was liable to a similar forfeiture if his riddle were found out. The adventure with the lion suggested to Samson the riddle which he proposed—"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." For three days they vainly tried to discover the meaning of this riddle; and at last, rather than incur the heavy forfeiture of "thirty shirts and thirty change of garments," they applied to the bride, and threatened destruction to her family if she did not extract from her husband the required solution, and make it known to them. He

was very unwilling to tell her, declaring that even his father and mother were ignorant of it. But she put in practice all the little arts by which women have ever carried their points with men usually weak—as Samson was, with all his corporal strength—and by her tears, and reproaches of his want of love and confidence, she so wearied him that he at length gave her the information she desired. The guests were consequently enabled, within the given time, to answer—"What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" But Samson was well convinced that the wit of man could never have discovered the true solution without a knowledge of the circumstances, which they could only have obtained by tampering with his wife. He exclaimed indignantly—"If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle!" He did not, however, as he might have done, refuse the payment of the forfeiture he had thus unexpectedly incurred; but to obtain it, he went and slew thirty of the Philistines near Ascalon, and gave their raiment to the persons who had expounded his riddle. He then returned to his own home, without again seeing his wife, with whose conduct he was deeply disgusted.

But after some time his resentment subsided, and he went down to Timnath to revisit his wife, with a present of a kid. But he found that in the mean time she had been given in marriage to a man among the Philistines, who in former times had been his most dear and familiar friend, and who, in that character, he had chosen to act as his paranymph, or brideman, at the wedding. The incensed hero rejected with indignation the offer of the father to give him his youngest daughter in lieu of the woman he had married; and regarding, probably, the treatment he had received as in some degree resulting from the insolence of superiority, and from the contempt in which the Philistines held the people they had so long held in subjection, he considered himself justified in avenging his own injuries upon the Philistine nation, as part and parcel of the wrongs his nation suffered. This mode of taking his revenge was no less remarkable than effective. He obtained three hundred jackals, and tying them together, with a firebrand between their tails, let them loose. The affrighted animals, being so bound as to be obliged to run side by side, hastened for shelter to the fields of standing and ripened corn, which, at that dry season, when the corn was ripe, was easily kindled into a blaze. As the tortured jackals took different directions, the conflagration was very extensive; nor was it confined to the standing corn, but wrought much damage among the olive grounds and vineyards, and consumed the corn which had been cut down and heaped for the threshing-floor.

When the Philistines understood the immediate cause of this act of hostility on the part of Samson, they went and burned his wife and her father's house with fire; thus punishing them for that breach of faith to which they were first led by the fear of this very punishment. If this act was intended to appease Samson, it had not that effect; for it did not prevent him from taking an opportunity which offered of discomfiting, with much slaughter, a considerable number of men belonging to that nation. He then withdrew to a strong rock, called Etam, in the tribe of Judah. To that place he was pursued by a large body of Philistines, whose presence occasioned great alarm to the Judaites. But when they understood that Samson individually was the sole object of this incursion, they most shamefully undertook of themselves to deliver him up to his enemies. Accordingly 3000 of them went up to him, feeling assured that he would not act against his own people. They told him they were come to bind him, and to put him into the hands of the Philistines. It strikingly illustrates the opinion Samson had of his own countrymen—an opinion which the circumstances justified—that before he consented to be bound, he obliged them to swear *that they would not kill him themselves.* He then allowed them to bind him securely with two new ropes, and to take him down to the Philistines. When he was led to their camp, they raised a triumphant shout against him. As he heard that shout, "the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him;" he

burst his strong bands asunder as easily as if they had been tow burnt with fire, and seizing the jaw-bone of an ass which lay at hand, he flew upon the Philistines, and, with no other weapon, routed the whole thousands which had come against him, slaying many of their number. They only lived who fled. As Milton makes the hero observe—

"Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve;
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,
Whom God hath of his special favour raised
As their deliverer? If he aught begin
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds."
Samson Agonistes.

Proudly confident in his strength, Samson was not deterred from going again among the Philistines, as soon as a motive occurred in the indulgence of that blind passion which had already brought him into much trouble, and which was destined to be his ruin. He went to Gaza, to visit a harlot of that place. His arrival was soon known; and although this was a different state from that which had been the scene of his former exploits, the authorities of the place were too sensible of the importance of destroying this implacable enemy of their nation, to neglect the advantage which his folly had placed in their hands. The city gates were closed to prevent his escape; and a strong guard was placed there to surprise and kill him in the morning. Samson, however, anticipated their plan; and, rising at midnight, he went boldly to the gate, forced it from its place, and, by way of bravado, carried it off entire, posts, bars, and all, to the top of a hill on the way to Hebron. The guards were too much astonished and terrified to molest or pursue him.

After this Samson did not again venture into the territory of the Philistines, but sought at home the indulgence of those blinding passions which make the strongest weak. "He loved a woman in the valley of Sorek," so celebrated for its vines. Her name was Dalilah, and she was probably of Israel, although Josephus, to save the credit of his countrywomen, makes her a Philistine. The Philistines themselves took an anxious interest in all the movements of Samson, and were soon acquainted with this new besotment, of which they prepared to take advantage. A deputation, consisting of a principal person from each of the five Philistine states, went up the valley to the place where he was. And now, we observe, it was not their object to get possession of his person while he retained all his strength, but to ascertain how that strength might be taken from him. They were well persuaded that a strength so greatly exceeding all they knew or had ever heard of, and to which that possessed by the few descendants of Anak who lived among them, could not for an instant be compared, must be supernatural —the result of some condition which might be neutralised, or of some charm which might be broken. They therefore offered Dalilah the heavy bribe of 1100 shekels of silver from each of their number (amounting altogether to 687*l.*) to discover the secret of his great strength, and to betray him into their hands, that they might bind and afflict him. Samson amused her by telling her of certain processes whereby the weakness of other men would be brought upon him; but each time the imposition was detected, by her putting the process to the proof. Then she continued to worry him by such trite but always effective reproaches, as, "*How canst thou say 'I love thee,' when thine heart is not with me?* thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth." Thus day by day she pressed him and urged him, until "his soul was vexed unto death," and at last he told the whole truth to her—that he was a Nazarite from his birth, and that if he left that state by cutting off his hair, which had never yet been shorn or shaven, his extraordinary strength would depart from him. Dalilah saw by his earnestness that he had this time told her the truth. Accordingly she sent for a man, who, while the hero slept with his head upon her lap, shaved off the

luxuriant tresses of his hair. His strength departed from him: but he knew it not; and when aroused from his sleep by the approach of the Philistines to seize him, he thought to put forth his wonted power and destroy them all; but his listless arms refused to render him their wonted service, and he knew—too late—that "Jehovah had departed from him."

The Philistines took and bound him; and, to complete his disablement, put out both his eyes—a mode of rendering a public enemy or offender incapable of further offence, of which this is the first historical instance, but which has ever since been much resorted to in the kingdoms of the east*. They then took him down to Gath, and binding him with fetters of brass, employed him to grind in the prison-house.

Nothing could more clearly than this deprivation evince the miraculous nature of the superhuman strength with which Samson had been for special purposes invested. Samson himself had *known* this before; but now, weak, blind, bound, "disglorified," and degraded to a woman's service†, he had occasion and leisure to *feel* it; and in his "prison-house" he probably learnt more of himself than he had known in all his previous life. Nor was this knowledge unprofitable. He felt that although he had *begun* to deliver Israel, this employment of the gifts confided to him had rather been the incidental effect of his own insensate passions than the result of those stern and steady purposes which became one who had so solemnly been set apart, even before his birth, to the salvation of his country. Such thoughts as these brought repentance to his soul; and as by this repentance his condition of Nazariteship was in some sort renewed, it pleased God that, along with the growth of his hair, his strength should gradually return to him.

* This barbarous infliction is, however, now—under the operation of those humanising influences which are insensibly pervading the east—in the course of being discontinued. It was formerly more common in Persia than in any other country; but it became comparatively rare under the late king; and we believe that no instance has yet occurred in which the present monarch has resorted to it.

† Grinding is almost invariably performed by women in the east.

Fatally for the Philistines, they took the view that, since the strength of Samson had been the gift of the God of Israel, their triumph over him evinced that their own god, Dagon, was more powerful than Jehovah. This raised the matter from being a case between Samson and the Philistines, to one between Jehovah and Dagon; and it thus became necessary that the Divine honour should be vindicated. An occasion for this was soon offered under aggravated circumstances.

The Philistines held a feast to Dagon, their god, who, as they supposed, had delivered their enemy into their hands. In the height of their festivity they thought of ordering Samson himself to be produced, that the people might feed their eyes with the sight of the degraded condition of one who had not long since been their dread. The assembled multitude greeted his appearance with shouts of triumph, and praised their god who had reduced "the destroyer of their country" to be their bond slave. After having been for some time exposed to their mockeries and insults, the blind hero desired the lad who led and held him by the hand, to let him rest himself against the pillars which sustained the chief weight of the roof of the temple, upon which no less than 3000 persons had assembled to view the spectacle, and celebrate Dagon's sacrifices. Thus placed, Samson breathed the prayer—"O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, *only this once*, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes!" Saying this, he grasped the pillars with his mighty arms, and crying, "Let me die with the Philistines!" he bowed himself with such prodigious force that the pillars gave way, and then the roof fell in, destroying with one tremendous crash all who were above it and below it. Thus those whom Samson slew at his death were more in number than those he slew in his life.

"It is remarkable that the exploits of Samson against the Philistines were performed singly, and without any co-operation from his countrymen to vindicate their liberties: whether it was that the arm of the

Lord might be the more visibly revealed in him, or that his countrymen were too much depressed by the severity of their servitude to be animated by his example. They seem also to have feared him almost as much as they did the Philistines. Else why should 3000 armed men of Judah have gone to persuade him to surrender himself to the Philistines, when, with such a leader, they might naturally expect to have been invincible? or why, when he destroyed [routed?] a thousand Philistines with so simple a weapon, did they not join in pursuit of the rest? So true was the prediction of the angel to his mother, that he should only *begin* to deliver Israel."*

It scarcely appears that Samson exercised any authority in the tribes; but to carry on the historical time, he is counted as one of the judges, and his administration is computed at forty years, ending by his death, in the year 1222 B.C.

* Hales, ii. 208.

CHAPTER IV.

ELI AND SAMUEL.

SAMSON was the last of the military heroes stirred up to deliver Israel from its oppressors. The two that followed, Eli and Samuel, were men of peace—the one a priest and the other a Levite.

In the absence of a person specially called and appointed to deliver and judge the people, the civil government, by the principles of the theocracy, devolved on the high-priest, as the vizier of the Great King, having access to his presence and being the interpreter of his will. It is not easy to see that Samson exercised the civil government over any of the tribes. And although, therefore, in order to carry on the succession of times, it is convenient to say that at his death the government devolved on the high-priest, yet, in fact, there is little reason to question that the high-priest exercised as much authority before as after. But in such times as these that authority was but small; and chiefly, as it would appear, judicial, particularly in adjusting disputes between persons of different tribes. The heads of the several tribes seem to have considered themselves fully competent to manage their internal affairs; and their divided allegiance to Jehovah involved the political evil, that the authority of the general government was proportionably weakened, and the cohesion of the tribes in the same degree relaxed. Subject to this preliminary observation, the high-priest may, for historical convenience, be considered the successor of Samson.

It is remarkable that functionaries so important, in the theory of the Hebrew constitution, as the high-priests, are scarcely noticed in the history of the Judges. From Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, to Eli, a high-priest is not mentioned on any occasion, nor would even their names be known but for the list in Chronicles* where the order is thus given:—

Abishua, Bukki, Uzzi, Zerahiah, Meraioth.

In the person of Eli, a change in the line of succession to this high office took place; as he was the first of the race of Ithamar, the second son of Aaron. But as the line of his elder son Eleazar was not extinct, and as the cause of the change is not assigned, some difficulty has been experienced in accounting for it. The Jews, as we have seen, suppose that it was because the existing pontiff had not taken measures sufficiently active to prevent Jephthah from sacrificing his daughter. But if, in the absence of all positive information, a conjecture might be hazarded, we would suggest the probability that the last pontiff of Eleazar's line died

* 1 Chron. iv. 4—16, 50—52.

leaving no son old enough to take the office, and that it then (as afterwards in the succession to the kingdom) devolved on his adult uncle or cousin of the line of Ithamar. Such a course resorted to in temporal successions to avoid the evils of a minority and regency, must have been much more necessary in the case of the high-priesthood. That the change took place in some such natural and quiet way, seems to afford the most satisfactory explanation of the silence of the record of a matter of such importance.

Eli was a good and pious man, estimable in private life for his many virtues and the mildness of his character; but he was greatly wanting in those sterner virtues which became his public station, and which were indeed necessary for the repression of wickedness and the punishment of the wrong doer. As he grew old, he devolved much of his public duty upon his sons Hophni and Phineas, two evil-disposed men, who possessed the energy their father lacked, without any of his virtues. Even in their sacred ministrations at the tabernacle, their conduct was so shamefully signalised by rapacity and licentiousness, that the people, through their misconduct, were led to abhor the offering of Jehovah. All this became known to Eli; but, instead of taking the immediate and decisive measures which became his station, he contented himself with a mild and ineffective remonstrance. This weakness of Eli was justly counted a sin in that venerable person; and a prophet was commissioned to warn him of the evil consequences, which were no less than the exclusion of his race from the pontificate to which he had been advanced. But even this could not rouse the old man to the exertion which became his station; but he seems rather to have acquiesced in this judgment as a thing not to be averted.

The next reproof which this remiss judge received was through an unexpected channel.

At the tabernacle, in personal attendance upon the high-priest, was a boy, a Levite, who having been the child signally granted in answer to the many prayers of Hannah, his previously barren mother, was by her consecrated from the womb, as a Nazarite, to Jehovah. In consequence of this, combined with his Levitical character, he had been left at the tabernacle as early as he could be separated from his mother's care, to render such services there as his tender years allowed. His name was Samuel: and as his pious mother came to Shiloh yearly with her husband to celebrate the passover (bringing with her a dress for her son), she had the delight of perceiving that he, growing up under the shadow of the altar, conducted himself with such propriety and discretion, that he stood very high in the favour of God and man. That he was thus, from his very infancy, constantly before the eyes of the people when they attended at the tabernacle, doubtless went far to prepare the way for that influence and station which he ultimately attained.

It was the thirty-first year of Eli's administration, when Samuel, then twelve years of age, lay on his bed at night, that he heard a voice calling him by his name. He supposed that it was Eli who had called: he hastened to him, but found that it was not so. This was repeated three times; and at the third time Eli concluding that it was the Lord who had called the lad, instructed him to answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Samuel obeyed, and the Voice then delivered to him, as an irrevocable doom, the former denunciations against Eli's house, "because his sons made themselves vile, *and he restrained them not;*" declaring that he would "do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." In the morning, the lad, being pressed by Eli, delivered to him the message he had received. But even this only gave occasion for the further manifestation of the passive virtues of his character,—"It is Jehovah," he said; "let him do what seemeth to him good."

After this, matters went on for some time, much as they had done. Eli's sons pursued their old courses, making themselves still more vile; and their father, though now well aware of the doom which hung over himself and them, took no measures in the hope to avert it. But as Samuel grew, the word of the Lord again came to him from time

to time, and all Israel knew that he was established to be a prophet of Jehovah.

Thus passed ten years, at the end of which the threatened judgments began to be inflicted upon the house of Eli. At that time the Israelites rashly, and without consulting their Divine King, embarked in a war with the Philistines. In the forty years since the death of Samson, this people had recruited their strength, and recovered the courage of which they appear to have been for a season deprived by the astounding calamity which swept away so many of their chiefs and nobles. In the first engagement the Israelites were defeated, with the loss of 4000 men. On this they sent to Shiloh for the ark of the covenant, not doubting of victory under its protection. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, attended it to the camp. On its arrival there, "all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again." On hearing this, and being apprised of its cause, the Philistines were filled with consternation; and the manner in which their alarm was expressed affords a very clear indication of the effect which had been produced on their minds, by the wonders which Jehovah had wrought for the deliverance and protection of Israel. "Woe unto us!" they cried; "who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness." The procedure itself did not strike them as strange,—for it was not unusual among ancient nations to take their gods to their wars,—and the ark with its cherubim the Philistines supposed to be the god of the Hebrews. They did not question the existence of that God or his special care for his people; neither did they deny his power, of which indeed they were afraid. They allowed Jehovah to be the god of the Hebrews, in the same sense in which they regarded Dagon to be their own god. It was his universal and exclusive power that they denied, or rather did not recognise.

Notwithstanding their alarm, the Philistines did not give way to despair; but like a brave people, which they were always, the imminence of the danger only stimulated them to the more strenuous exertions for victory. They cried to one another, "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight!"

They fought: and the victory was given to them, to punish the Hebrews for their misdoings, and for having engaged in this war without consulting their King, as well as to teach them that undue confidence in the ark itself was a superstition, if not an idolatry, apart from a due reliance on God himself, whose footstool only the ark was. Thirty thousand men of Israel fell in the battle and pursuit; the guilty sons of Eli were among the slain, and *the ark itself was taken.*

Eli, blind and old, remained at Shiloh, anxiously expecting news from the camp; "for his heart trembled for the ark of God;" and that he might be in the way of receiving the earliest rumours from the war, he sat watching by the wayside. One day he heard an outcry in the town, which had been occasioned by the news brought by one of the fugitives from the battle. This man, with his clothes rent and dust upon his head, soon came before the high-priest and gave to him the tidings,—that Israel fled before the Philistines—that there had been a great slaughter—that his two sons, Hophni and Phineas, were slain—and that the ark of God was taken! No sooner had the last words passed the lips of the messenger, than the high-priest fell backward from off his seat; and being old and heavy, his neck was broken in the fall. Soon after the news of all these calamities was carried to the wife of Phineas; on hearing which she was taken with the pains of labour, and died, after she had looked upon the son to whom she gave birth, and given him the sad name of Ichabod [*Inglorious*]; for she said, "The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, is taken." These incidents serve to evince the depth of that astonishment and grief with which the loss of the ark was regarded.

The Philistines soon found that they had small cause to rejoice in the glorious trophy they had won: and most convincingly was it

made known to them that the Israelites had been defeated for the punishment of their sins, which rendered them unworthy of their God's protection, and not through His want of power to save. The Philistines certainly considered that they had taken captive the God of the Hebrews, and could, on the principles of pagan idolatry, hardly fail to attribute it to the superior power of Dagon, their own god. Yet they still must have had a very salutary dread of the God of Israel; and while they could not but regard the ark as the proudest of their trophies, it was probably more with the view of propitiating him, by associating him with their own god, than by way of insult, that they deposited the conquered ark in the temple of their Dagon at Azotus. But God disdained this dishonouring alliance; and twice the Philistines found their idol overthrown, and the second time broken to pieces, before the ark of God. And further to demonstrate His power in such a way as might include a punishment for their idolatry and for the abominations connected with it, the Lord smote the people of the place with hemorrhoids, or the piles, with a mortal destruction. The land also swarmed with jerboas, whereby the products of the fields were consumed. Attributing these calamities to the presence of the ark, they sent it to Gath, where it remained until the pressure of the same inflictions compelled them to send it from them. It was taken to Ekron, another of the five metropolitan cities of Philistia. The Ekronites received it with terror, crying, "They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." They therefore in an assembly of "the lords of the Philistines" proposed that the ark should be sent back to its own place in the land of Israel. This was determined; nor was the determination too soon, for already the hand of God was so heavy upon Ekron, that "the cry of the city went up to heaven." And that it might be sent away with all honour, the diviners, who were consulted as to the best means of giving effect to the intention which had been formed, counselled that five golden hemorrhoids, and five golden mice, one from each of the Philistine states, should be deposited in a coffer beside the ark, as a trespass-offering: for even thus early the custom had come into use of making votive offerings representing the instruments of affliction, or of the parts afflicted, to the god to whom the infliction or the cure was attributed. That they might give the glory to the God of Israel, and not harden their hearts as did the Egyptians, and thereby bring upon themselves the punishments of that people, were the reasons by which this course of conduct was enforced. And they are remarkable as showing the effect, even at this remote date, upon the neighbouring nations, of the wonders of judgment and deliverance which had been wrought in the land of Egypt.

To testify all possible respect, the ark was placed in a new car, to which were yoked two kine, whose necks had never before been subjected to the yoke. Their calves were tied up at home; and, by the advice of the priests, it was concluded to leave the cows free to take their own course;—if the animals went away from their calves to the land of Israel, it was to be inferred that a right judgment had been formed of the cause from which their calamities proceeded; but if not, they might conclude that it had been the result of natural causes. From such incidents the heathen were even thus early accustomed to conjecture the will of their gods. In this case, no sooner were the kine set free than they turned their backs upon their young, and took the road towards the town of Bethshemesh in Judah, being the nearest city of the Levites towards the Philistine frontier. It was the time of the wheat-harvest, when the people of the town were abroad in the valley reaping the fruits of their fields. They beheld the ark advancing with great gladness; and when the kine stopped of their own accord, near a great stone, in a field belonging to one Joshua, the Levites who were present detached them from the car, and offered them up in sacrifice upon that stone before the ark. And the stone being thus consecrated by sacrifice, the ark was removed from the car and deposited thereon. The five lords of the Philistines, who had followed the car to the

borders of Bethshemesh (which was twelve miles distant from Ekron), and had stood witnessing these proceedings, now returned home, well convinced that it was the hand of the God of Israel by which they had been smitten. The ark had been in their hands seven months.

The adventures of the ark, and its constant exposure to their sight, begat in the Bethshemites a familiarity towards it, inconsistent with the respect due to Jehovah, and which it was highly necessary to repress. When therefore their familiarity went so far that they ventured to raise the cover of the ark, to gratify their curiosity with a view of its contents, sixty of their number—principal persons of the place—were smitten with death. On this the people cried, with great consternation, "Who is able to stand before this holy God, Jehovah? and to whom shall he go up from us?" They decided to invite the people of Kirjath-jearim to take the ark away. They did so, and deposited it in the house of Abinadab "in the hill." This person set apart his son Eleazar to take charge of it—to preserve it from pollution, and to keep all things clean and orderly about it. Thus it remained about eighty-two years. Why it was not returned to Shiloh does not very clearly appear. Probably no command on the subject was given; and from the experience which the Israelites now had of the jealousy with which its sanctity was guarded, they were afraid to remove it without express orders. Besides, at this time the people were again far gone into idolatrous practices, which made them comparatively indifferent about the ark; and it is not unlikely that the reaction of the sentiment of astonishment and grief with which its loss had been regarded, did much to impair that veneration of which it had been the object. Add to this that they had been without the ark for seven months, in the course of which they had accustomed their minds to the want of it, and had learned to regard it as less essential to them than it had before seemed. The tabernacle still remained at Shiloh, which continued to be the seat of the appointed ministrations, until it was removed, in the reign of Saul, to Nob, probably in consequence of the destruction of Shiloh in the Philistine war*.

For their idolatries and alienation, the Hebrews were punished by twenty years continuance [including the seven months of the ark's absence] of their subjection to the Philistines.

It is usually stated that Samuel succeeded Eli. He was then little more than twenty years of age; and although, as his years advanced, he doubtless acquired much authority among the people from the influence of his character and position, there is no evidence that it was any other than that which prophets usually exercised. It rather appears from the text that it was *after* the twenty years of further servitude to the Philistines, that Samuel was publicly called to assume the civil government.

At the end of these twenty years the people "lamented after the Lord," or repented of the sins by which they had alienated themselves from him, and were disposed to return to their allegiance. Samuel then came forward in his prophetic character, and promised them deliverance from the Philistines, if they would put away the strange gods—the Baals and Ashtaroths (representing the sun and moon), and devote themselves to the exclusive service of Jehovah. His directions were followed; and he then convened an assembly of all Israel at Mizpeh, where they held a solemn fast and humiliation for their sins, and poured out water before Jehovah, as expressive of their despondency or grief. And to testify their good intentions for the future, the prophet himself was there invested by them with the authority of a "judge."

The Philistines took umbrage at this great assembly in Mizpeh, which, they rightly judged, boded no good to the continuance of their dominion. They assembled their forces and marched to that place, to disperse the congregation. The people, not being prepared for war, were filled with alarm on the approach of their enemies, and besought Samuel to cry to Jehovah for them, that he might save them from the hand of the Philistines. Samuel did so with great earnest-

* 1 Sam. xiv. 3; Jer. vii. 12—14, xxvi. 6—9.

ness; and he was in the act of offering up a lamb as a burnt-offering, when the Philistines drew near to battle. The prayers of the prophet were then answered by a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, by which the enemy were alarmed and confounded, while the Israelites, recognising the sign, were inspired with sudden and indomitable courage. They fell impetuously upon the force they had so lately dreaded, and slew vast numbers of them, chasing the remainder as far as Bethcar. In memory of this great victory, Samuel set up a memorial-stone, and gave it the name of Ebenezer (*the help-stone*), saying, "Hitherto hath Jehovah *helped* us."

This very brilliant victory broke the spirit of the Philistines for many years. They were obliged to restore all their conquests from the Israelites; and, for many years to come, they kept carefully within their own territories, and abstained from any hostile acts against the Hebrews. Their example was followed by the other neighbours of Israel, which hence enjoyed the felicity of a profound peace during the entire period of Samuel's sole administration.

This excellent judge administered justice regularly to the tribes in his annual circuit, which he took to the places of sacred stones at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and constantly at his own place of abode at Ramah, where he built an altar to Jehovah. This was probably by the Divine permission or direction, at least for the present, as God had not yet given any declaration where the ark was to be fixed.

The sole administration of Samuel lasted twelve years, dating it, as we do, from the end of the Philistine servitude, and not from the death of Eli. Near the close of this period, when the prophet was growing old and gray-headed, being sixty-four years of age, he appointed his sons, Joel and Abiah, to act for him at Bethel and Beersheba. But they walked not in the steps of their father. "They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."

This misconduct of his sons, with his own advancing age, and the seemingly unsettled state in which the government would be left at his death, were among the causes which at this time induced the elders of Israel to resort to Samuel at Ramah, and to demand of him that a king should be appointed to reign over them, as in other nations.

The causes which we have just stated, together with the regular administration of justice to which Samuel had accustomed them, occasioned the demand, it would seem, *at this particular time;* but there were deeper causes which would unquestionably have brought them to this point ere long, if it had not now. These causes have been well discriminated by Jahn.

This able writer justly refers the frequent interruptions to the welfare of the Hebrew state under the judges to—"1. The effeminacy and cowardice of the people; and, 2. To the disunion and jealousy of the tribes, who never assisted each other with the requisite zeal and alacrity. But as this effeminacy arose from the vices of idolatry, and their cowardice from a want of confidence in Jehovah; so the disunion and jealousy of the tribes, though selfishness was the immediate cause, arose from a disposition to neglect their Divine King, and not to consider themselves as the united and only people of Jehovah. This disposition, if it did not originate from, was at least very much heightened by, the multiplication of deities. Thus both these causes of their misfortunes owed their origin to idolatry, that great cause of all their calamities, so often mentioned in the sanctions of the law. Thus the people, by increasing their gods, enervated themselves, and prepared for themselves those sufferings and chastisements by which they were again to be brought back to their King, JEHOVAH."

He proceeds to observe that "These causes of national misfortune were all in operation at the time of Samuel, and threatened to produce after his death still greater calamities. The tribes beyond the Jordan had formidable enemies in the Ammonites and the southern tribes in the Philistines, while the northern tribes stood aloof from the dangers of their more exposed countrymen. The latter seems to have been the principal reason why the rulers in general assembly requested a king. The tribes in southern

Palestine and beyond the Jordan were the most earnest for this change in the government; they feared that the death of Samuel would leave them without a supreme magistrate, and that the nation being again disunited, they should be left to their fate. The degeneracy of Samuel's sons, who had been appointed subordinate judges, or deputies, increased their apprehensions. They, therefore, strenuously insisted on their demand, "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations." They had reason to hope that a king invested with supreme authority might be able to unite the power of the whole nation and protect each tribe with the collected strength of all; that under him the affairs of government would be more promptly administered and necessary aid more readily afforded; that if he were a man devoted to Jehovah, he could more effectually repress or prevent idolatry, and thus place the welfare of the state on a more solid foundation. They might imagine themselves justified in this request as Moses had taken it for granted that the nation would eventually have a king, and the same thing had been promised to their great progenitor Abraham. It conduces greatly to the honour of the Hebrews that they attempted this change in their constitution, not by their own power, but in accordance with the principles of the theocracy; they requested it of their King, Jehovah, by the intervention of a prophet, and they effected it without bloodshed—a manifest proof that the time of the judges was neither what is usually understood by a 'barbarous' nor a 'heroic age.'"

But as all the objects which they desired to realise were attainable under the theocracy, were they but faithful to its principles and engagements; and as the unseen King, Jehovah, would necessarily be obscured by a subordinate, visible monarch, He, by means of Samuel, gave the rulers to understand his disapprobation of their request; and at the same time represented to them the burdens they would have to bear under a king, especially how easily he might be led to imitate other oriental monarchs, and to disregard the law of Jehovah.

The picture which was then drawn by Samuel exhibits in a lively manner the character of the monarchies which at that time existed in the east, and enables us to ascertain that, whatever changes may have taken place in particular states, the monarchical principle as it then existed has been preserved to this day in its full vigour in the east. This is so true, that there is no royal usage mentioned by Samuel which may not be illustrated and explained from the modern sovereignties of that part of the world. The statement must have seemed the more effective from the implied contrast to the mild and gentle character of that service which the Lord, as king of Israel, had required. Samuel reminded them that their kings would soon fall into the state of other monarchs, to support which the heaviest exactions upon their persons and estates would become necessary. He would take their young men and employ them as charioteers and horsemen, and even (according to the Egyptian custom) as runners before and about his chariot. A standing army would deprive them of the valuable services of their young men; and if this were not enough, the king of a future day would "set them to ear *his* ground, and to reap *his* harvests, and to make *his* instruments of war, and instruments of *his* chariots. In like manner the daughters of Israel, who should marry and bring up children, would be largely taken to minister to the luxury of the court as confectioners and bakers. Nor would he much scruple to take the chosen and best of their male and female slaves, as well as their labouring cattle, and "put them to *his* work." And then to support his expenses, the heaviest exactions would be necessary; and although the kingly *tenth* were already appropriated to Jehovah, the Divine King, not the less would their human king exact his kingly dues; thus, in fact, rendering their burdens greater than those of any other nation. A clear intimation was also given them of the danger to which their landed possessions would be ultimately exposed under the form of government which they so much desired. For the expression, "He will take your fields, and your vine-

yards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants," manifestly refers to the fact that inasmuch as their true King, Jehovah, was the sovereign proprietor of the soil, and as such had long before distributed the whole in inalienable estates among the people; whatever human king they might have, would necessarily stand in the, then and there, peculiar position, of being only a civil governor, and not, like the neighbouring king, also the territorial sovereign; and that hence, wanting the means of providing for his family and servants which other kings possessed, he would be tempted to avail himself of all kinds of pretences to dispossess them of the lands which they held from their Divine King. "Ye shall be his servants," concludes the prophet. "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you: and JEHOVAH will not hear you in that day."

The purpose of the people was, however, too firmly fixed to be shaken even by this discouraging representation. An acquiescence in their demand was therefore reluctantly conceded, probably, as Jahn conjectures, "Because the desired change was requested of the invisible King in a lawful manner, through the mediation of his prophet, and because, in the present disposition of the nation, it might be effected without bloodshed. If the remark of Polybius be in all cases true, that 'all aristocracies and democracies terminate at last in monarchy,'* this change must have taken place in some future time, and perhaps might have been attended with civil war.

"By this alteration of the constitution the theocracy was indeed thrown somewhat into the shade, as it was no longer so manifest that God was the king of the Hebrews. Still, however, as the principles of the theocracy were interwoven with the fundamental and unchangeable laws of the state, their influence did not entirely cease, but the elected king was to act as the viceroy and vassal of Jehovah. On this account Moses had already established the following regulations †:—

"1. That the Hebrews, whenever they adopted the monarchical form of government, should raise only those to the throne, who were chosen by Jehovah himself. As monarchs (called kings of kings) were accustomed to appoint sub-kings, or viceroys, in the several provinces of their dominions, so was the king of the Hebrews to be called to the throne by Jehovah, to receive the kingdom from him, and in all respects to consider himself as his representative, viceroy, and vassal. On this occasion the will of Jehovah was to be made known by a prophet, or by means of Urim and Thummim, and the viceroy elect was to prove himself an instrument of God by protecting the commonwealth against its foes. The succession of the royal house was to depend on the will of God, to be made known by his prophets.

"2. Moses had likewise ordained that the new king should be a native Israelite. Thus foreigners were excluded from the throne, even though they should be proposed by false prophets; for, being heathens, they might transgress the fundamental law of the state by the introduction of idolatry; or, at least, it might be difficult for them to rule in all respects as the vassals of Jehovah. This regulation had reference merely to free elections, and was by no means to be understood, as it was explained by Judas of Galilee ‡ and the Zealots during the last war with the Romans, that the Hebrews were not to submit to these foreign powers, under whose dominion they were brought by an all-directing Providence. On the contrary, Moses himself had predicted such events, and Jeremiah and Ezekiel earnestly exhorted their countrymen to surrender quietly to the Chaldeans."§

Upon such conditions the choice of a king was permitted, according to law; and in the year 1110 B.C., 538 years after the exode, the first election took place.

Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Ben-

* Hist. lib. v. 6, 7.

† Deut. xvii. 14—20.

‡ Acts v. 37.

§ In the preceding paragraphs, all the passages marked as quotations are from Jahn, book iii. sect. 23, book iv. sects. 24, 25.

jamin, went forth about this time with a servant to seek some strayed asses belonging to his father. For three days the search was fruitless; and then finding himself near Ramah, the stated residence of Samuel, he resolved to go and consult him; for it was known to all Israel that nothing was hidden from the man of God. According to the still subsisting custom of the east, no one could, with the least propriety, present himself before a man in authority, and still less before a person of so sacred a character as Samuel bore, without some present, however small, in token of his respect and homage. But although the toil and travel-stained stranger who appeared before the prophet could only lay before him the worth of sevenpence halfpenny in silver, he was received with particular notice and honour; for it had been specially revealed to Samuel that on that day and at that hour the destined king of Israel would present himself before him. The prophet assured Saul that his father had found the asses, and began now to be anxious about his son. Nevertheless, he urged him to stay with him over the night, and partake of a feast which he had provided; at the same time conveying to him a slight intimation of the splendid fortunes which were in store for him; to which, with modest self-withdrawment, Saul replied, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" Part of this must be attributed to the oriental forms of self-detraction; for although Benjamin was certainly the smallest of the tribes—as it had not recovered the serious blow inflicted by all the other tribes—it appears from the history that the family of Kish was of some consideration in Benjamin.

In consequence of the intimation he had previously received, Samuel had against this time prepared an entertainment, to which thirty principal persons of the place had been invited. Samuel conducted the stranger to the room in which these guests were assembled, and led him to the corner-seat of honour; and when the meat was served, directed the most honourable joint — the shoulder—to be set before him.

Being summer, the bed for Saul was made on the house-top; and before he lay down, Samuel communed with him there, probably to ascertain his sentiments and character, and to acquaint him with the true nature of that form of kingly government which he was destined to establish. Early in the morning the prophet called Saul to depart, and walked forth with him. After a time Samuel directed the servant to pass on before; and then the prophet, desiring Saul to stand still that he might show him the purposes of God, produced a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, thus anointing him "captain over the Lord's inheritance." He then kissed him, and to confirm his faith, proceeded to tell him all the incidents that would occur to him during his journey home, and to encourage him, under the sense he entertained of his own inferior claims to such a distinction, assured him that on the way, and through the Divine influence, the needful qualifications should grow upon him, so that he should seem to receive another* heart and to become another man.

On his way home all happened to Saul which the prophet had foreshown; and some of the incidents are too illustrative of the manners of the time to pass unnoticed. In the plain of Tabor he was met by three men who were proceeding to the place of sacred stones in Bethel, to worship God there. One of them carried three kids, intended as a sacrifice for each of their number; another had three loaves of bread; and the third a leather bottle of wine, all evidently intended to be used with the flesh of the kids in an offering-feast. They gave Saul the salutation of peace—such as travellers give each other by the way—probably the usual "Peace be unto thee!" which is no other than the common *Salam aleikoom* of the modern east; and they gave him two of the three loaves of bread which they had with them.

As Saul went on to Gibeah in Benjamin,

* *Another*, not *new*; a distinction which, from the Scriptural acceptation of the word new, together with the after conduct of Saul, it may be important to note.

which seems to have been called "the hill of God," either because there was here a "high-place" consecrated to the worship of God, or because it was the seat of a "school of the prophets," or a kind of college where young men were instructed in the duties of religion, in the knowledge of the law, in psalmody and other religious exercises. Or it may have been so called for *both* these reasons, for both existed. As Saul drew nigh he perceived a company of these prophets returning from the high-place, where they had been to worship; and as they went they sang the praises of God to the sound of the psaltery, the tabret, the pipe, and the harp. As they drew nigh, the spirit of God came upon him, as Samuel had predicted, and he became as another man. He joined the prophets, and sang the praises of God with them. And when those to whom he was known (for this was in his own tribe and neighbourhood) witnessed this sudden endowment of the untaught husbandman, they were much astonished, and said one to another, "What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" Whence this last expression passed into a proverb, applied to one found in society with which his previous habits had not prepared him to mingle. It may be seen, however, that this incident would serve in a very conspicuous manner to direct attention to the person and character of Saul.

Samuel, in parting from Saul, had appointed a future meeting at Gilgal, to which place of sacred stones he convoked all Israel for the election of a king. As on other occasions, the choice of God was to be manifested by lot, which would also tend to prevent jealousies and the suspicion of partiality on the part of Samuel. In the usual manner of successive indications, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by the lot from the several tribes; then the family of Matri from the families of that tribe; then the house of Kish from the family of Matri; and, lastly, Saul from the household of Kish. But Saul was not to be found. Well assured of the result, he had not formed one in the assembly, but had, from modesty, kept himself apart among the baggage. When his retreat was discovered, he was led forward into the midst of the congregation; and the mass of the people observed with complacency that the elected king was of most noble presence, in the full prime of life, comely and tall, being higher by the head and shoulders than any of those among whom he stood. On such a man, in a rude age, when personal qualities are the most valued, the suffrages of all men would have centred, regarding him as pointed out by nature for rule and dominion. And so far did this feeling operate even on Samuel, that with evident pride that, since there must be a king, the divine choice had fallen on one who must seem in the eyes of all men so well qualified to dignify his high office, he thus proclaimed him to the people, "See ye him whom Jehovah hath chosen, *that there is none like him among all the people*." And the people, responding to that feeling, raised at once the shout of recognition, "Long live the king!" Vive le Roi

In concluding the present Book, we are reluctant to withhold from the reader the very interesting survey which Jahn has taken of the office of the judges, and of the condition of Israel under their administration. This survey is embodied in the ensuing paragraphs, but having modified several passages to suit them to the views which we have ourselves developed, we abstain from giving them the form of a direct quotation.

From what has been already said respecting the judges and their achievements, we can ascertain, with a tolerable degree of certainty, the nature of their office. Most of them indeed had been at the head of armies, and delivered their country from foreign oppression: Eli and Samuel, however, were not military men. Deborah was judge before she planned the war against Jabin; and of Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, it is at least uncertain whether they ever held any military command. Judges are mentioned in the Mosaic law, in connection with the high-priest, as arbiters of civil controversies, without any allusion to war*. In like manner, the judges who were appointed over

* Deut. xvii. 9.

Tyre after king Baal were certainly not military officers, for the city was at that time tributary to Babylon. The command of the army can therefore be scarcely considered as the peculiar distinction of these magistrates. But as in ancient times the duties of a judge were reckoned among the first and most important duties of a ruler, so the Hebrew judges appear to have been appointed for the general administration of public affairs, and the command of the army fell to them as the supreme executive officers. In many cases, it is true, military achievements were the means whereby men elevated themselves to the rank of judges: but our inquiry is, not how the office was obtained, but for what purposes it was instituted. It may, however, be proper to recollect that Jephthah and Samuel, and, for aught that appears, Jair, Elon, Ibzan, and Abdon, were raised to this office by the free unsolicited voice of the people.

The office of these judges or regents was held during life, but it was not hereditary, neither could they appoint their successors. This arrangement might seem to be attended with the disadvantage that at the death of a judge the supreme executive authority ceased; but on consideration it will appear that these civil functions devolved on the high-priest, or rather were inherent to his high office, and were called into operation in the absence of any person more especially appointed to exercise them. And, without this, the apparent disadvantage would be more than counterbalanced by its preventing a degenerate heir or successor from giving to idolatry the support of his influence. This authority was limited by the law alone; and in doubtful cases they were directed by the sacred Oracle*. They were not obliged in common cases to ask advice of the ordinary rulers; it was sufficient that they did not remonstrate against the measures of the judge. In important emergencies, however, they convoked a general assembly of the rulers, over which they presided and exerted a powerful influence. They could issue orders, but not enact laws; they could neither levy taxes nor appoint officers, except perhaps in the army. Their authority extended only over those tribes by whom they had been elected or acknowledged; for, as has been before remarked, several of the judges presided over separate tribes. There was no salary attached to their office, nor was there any income appropriated to them, unless it might be a larger share of the spoils, and those presents which were made to them as testimonials of respect†. They had no external marks of dignity, and maintained no retinue of courtiers, though some of them were very opulent. They were not only simple in their manners, moderate in their desires, and free from avarice and ambition, but noble and magnanimous men, who felt that whatever they did for their country was above all reward, and could not be recompensed; who desired merely to promote the public good, and chose rather to deserve well of their country than to be enriched by its wealth. This exalted patriotism, like everything else connected with politics in the theocratical state of the Hebrews, was partly of a religious character; and those regents always conducted themselves as the officers of God; in all their enterprises they relied upon him, and their only care was that their countrymen should acknowledge the authority of Jehovah, their invisible King‡. Still they were not without faults, neither are they so represented by their historians; they relate, on the contrary, with the utmost frankness, the great sins of which some of them were guilty. They were not merely deliverers of the state from a foreign yoke, but destroyers of idolatry, foes of pagan vices, promoters of the knowledge of God, of religion, and of morality; restorers of theocracy in the minds of the Hebrews, and powerful instruments of Divine Providence in the promotion of the great design of preserving the Hebrew constitution, and by that means of rescuing the true religion from destruction.

By comparing the periods during which the Hebrews were oppressed by their enemies with those in which they were independent and governed by their own constitution, it is

* Num. xxvii. 21.

† Judges viii. 24.

‡ Judg. viii. 22, *et seq.*; comp. Heb. xi.

apparent that the nation in general experienced much more prosperity than adversity in the time of the judges: their dominion continued 472 years; but the whole period of foreign oppression amounts only to 131 years, scarcely a one-fourth part of that period. Even during these years of bondage, the whole nation was seldom under the yoke at the same time, but, for the most part, separate tribes only were held in servitude; nor were their oppressions always very severe; and all the calamities terminated in the advantage and glory of the people, as soon as they abolished idolatry and returned to their King, Jehovah. Neither was the nation in such a state of anarchy at this time as has generally been supposed. There were regular judicial tribunals at which justice could be obtained; and when there was no supreme regent, the public welfare was provided for by the high-priest and the ordinary rulers of the tribes*. These rulers, it is true, were jealous of each other, and their jealousies not unfrequently broke out into civil war; but the union of the state was never entirely destroyed. They were not always provided with arms†; but yet, when united under their King, Jehovah, they gained splendid victories. They were not sufficiently careful to repress idolatry, but they never suffered it to become universally predominant. The sacred tabernacle was never entirely deserted and shut up, nor was it ever polluted by the rites of heathen superstition.

These times would certainly not be considered so turbulent as barbarous, much less would they be taken, contrary to the clearest evidence and to the analogy of all history, for a 'heroic age,'‡ if they were viewed without the prejudices of pre-conceived hypothesis. It must never be forgotten that the Book of Judges is by no means a complete history. It is, in a manner, a mere register of diseases, from which, however, we have no right to conclude that there were no healthy men, much less that there were no healthy seasons; when the book itself, for the most part, mentions only a few tribes in which the epidemic prevailed, and notices long periods during which it had entirely ceased. Whatever may be the result of more accurate investigation, it remains undeniable that the history of the Hebrews during this period, perfectly corresponds throughout to the sanctions of the law; and they were always prosperous when they complied with the conditions on which prosperity was promised to them; it remains undeniable that the government of God was clearly manifested, not only to the Hebrews, but to their heathen neighbours, that the fulfilling of the promises and threatenings of the law were so many sensible proofs of the universal dominion of the Divine King of the Hebrews; and, consequently, that all the various fortunes of that nation were so many means of preserving the knowledge of God on the earth. The Hebrews had no sufficient reason to desire a change in their constitution, since all that was necessary was that they should observe the conditions on which national prosperity had been promised to them.

* Ruth iv. 1—11; Judges viii. 22, xi. 1—11; 1 Sam. iv. 1, vii. 1, 2.

† 2 Judg. v. 8; 1 Sam. xiii. 19.

‡ It is thus characterized by Heeren and other writers.

BOOK IV.

THE KINGDOM.

CHAPTER I.

SAUL.

It is very important to notice that the election of Saul was by no means unconditional, or to such unrestricted regal power as is usually exercised in the east. In fact the Hebrew monarchy, as now established, is, we believe, the only example which the history of the east can offer of a limited constitutional government. Such of these limitations as *necessarily* resulted from the peculiar position of the king, as the regent or vicegerent of a spiritual and Almighty King, have already been pointed out. But besides these, there were other conditions not so necessarily resulting from this position, but judged essential to the welfare of the state and to the objects of its institution. And these were specially and formally guaranteed; and, together with the others, unquestionably formed what, in the language of modern politics, would be called "the constitution" of the Hebrew monarchy. We are told that after the people had accepted, with acclamations, the king on whom the lot had fallen, Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, *and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah.*" It was thus deposited in the keeping of the priests, that it might be preserved safely, and that it might be at all times seen whether the king observed the conditions on which the crown had been offered to him and accepted by him. Here, then, we have not only a constitution, but a written charter. We do not indeed know what powers it conferred upon the king, or what restraints it imposed upon his will; we only know that his authority was far less absolute than that of other ancient oriental kings. It may, indeed, without difficulty be concluded, that they were conformable to those principles of subserviency to the theocracy, which have already been explained, as well as to those foundations for a limited monarchy which had long before been laid by Moses, who was enabled to foresee and provide for the exigency which now occurred.

1. It was thus, by the fundamental law of the commonwealth, forbidden that the king should introduce any new mode of religious worship; neither could he, like the kings of other nations, perform the functions of a priest, unless entitled to do so, independently of his regal office, as one of the family of Aaron, which was the case with the Asmonean princes. On the contrary, he was bound to rule as the representative and vassal of Jehovah; to promote the institutions of religion as a matter of obedience to Him; to suppress idolatry as rebellion against Him; to attend to the declarations of the prophets as his ambassadors, and faithfully to observe the laws of Moses*. On this account it was required that the king should make a transcript of the law from the copy of the priests, and "read therein all the days of his life, that he might learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of the law . . . that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren," that is, that he should be no arbitrary despot, making his own will or pleasure the rule of his conduct†.

2. When we find subjoined to this injunction, as the consequence of obedience to it, "to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel," we infer that it was intended that the kingdom should be hereditary, but yet so that it might be transferred from one

* 1 Sam. xv. 1—20. † Deut. xvii. 14—20.

family to another by the will of Jehovah and the wishes of the people. In this manner it actually did pass from the line of Saul to that of David, and in the kingdom of Israel the change was very frequent.

3. The king was forbidden to imitate the pernicious luxury of other oriental monarchs. He was not allowed to hoard up large treasures, lest the circulation of money should be obstructed, industry discouraged, or his subjects impoverished; neither was he permitted to keep a numerous harem, lest (not to mention other disadvantages) he should be alienated from God by his women, many of whom would probably be foreigners.

4. As cavalry could be of little use in the mountainous regions of Palestine, and as the king of the Hebrews was never to become a conqueror of foreign lands, or a universal monarch, he was forbidden to maintain large bodies of cavalry. So much reliance was also placed in those times upon horses, and so much pride taken in them, that the possession of a body of cavalry was calculated to interfere with that simple reliance upon the power of Jehovah, which the Hebrews were still required to exercise in such military undertakings as might obtain his sanction; and none unsanctioned by Him were lawful.

The election of Saul, though generally approved, did not meet with universal acceptance. In one point of view, the choice of a person belonging to a neutral and powerless tribe was calculated to obviate the rivalries of the two great tribes of Ephraim and Judah, who probably both thought that they had the better right to the distinction, but neither of whom were likely to agree that the other should have had it. But, on the other hand, Saul himself was not likely to derive the more respect from this neutral and politically insignificant position which prevented the mutual jealousies of these great rivals. But seeing that the tribe of Benjamin was, from its geographical position, closely connected with, and in some degree dependent on that of Judah, it is more probable that the dissentients, "the children of Belial," who despised Saul, and said, "How shall this man save us?" were of the haughty and turbulent tribe of Ephraim. Samuel left it to the people themselves to settle the money price they were to pay for their new luxury; and, although he had foreshown the exactions which the regal state would in the end render necessary, it was not his object to give his sanction to that which he had announced as a contingent evil. Besides, the external organisation of the new government was left to be developed by circumstances, the prophet having only cared to secure the principles. Saul was left to grow into his position and its privileges, while Samuel continued to administer the civil government: for it is to be borne in mind that Samuel continued to judge Israel all the days of his life, which did not terminate until thirty-eight years after the election of Saul, who himself outlived the prophet but two years. The position of Saul was, therefore, for the greater part of his reign, chiefly that of a military leader, while Samuel continued to discharge the civil part of the regal office, to which it was probably obvious that Saul was not competent. The *kingdom*, properly speaking, was not established, not developed under Saul, but only *begun* with him. And this it is necessary to understand, if we would clearly apprehend the *growth* of that monarchical principle which was only *planted* with Saul.

After his election at Gilgal, the king returned to his own home at Gibeah, where such "presents" were brought him by the people as oriental kings usually receive, and which form no inconsiderable portion of their ordinary revenue. As the product of these offerings was probably more than adequate to the present wants and expectations of the king, who as yet assumed no regal state, the question as to the permanent support of the kingly government was not yet pressed upon the attention of either the people or the king. The discontented parties, however, "brought him no presents." Saul took no notice of their insults, but wisely "held his peace."

Very soon after Saul's election, the Ammonites, under their king Nahash, marched into the old disputed territory beyond Jordan, and laid siege to the important city

of Jabesh Gilead. The inhabitants, avowing their impotence, offered to submit to the condition of paying tribute to the Ammonites; but the insulting and barbarous king refused to receive their submission on any other terms than that the right eye of every one of them should be extinguished, that they might remain as so many living monuments of his victory. Here again was a barbarity of which the Israelites were never guilty, even in thought. The people of Jabesh Gilead were so distressed that they dared not absolutely refuse even these merciless conditions, but besought a grace of seven days for deliberation. This they did with the hope that the tribes on the other side the river might, in the interval, be roused by the news to appear for their deliverance. Nor was their hope in vain. Saul no sooner received the intelligence than he at once and decidedly stood up in his position of a hero and a king, claiming the obedience of the people, whom he summoned to follow him to the deliverance of Jabesh Gilead. This call was readily obeyed; for it ran in the names of Saul *and Samuel*, and was conveyed in that imperative and compulsory form, which it was not, under any circumstances, judged safe to disobey*. For he hewed a yoke of oxen in pieces, and sent the pieces by the hands of swift messengers to all Israel, calling them, by all the penalties of that well-known and dreaded sign, to follow him. All Israel obeyed with one consent. All the men, of age to bear arms, quitted their several labours, and hastened from all parts to the plain of Bezek, where Saul numbering his army, found it to consist of 330,000 men, of whom 30,000 were of Judah, which seems rather an inadequate proportion for so large a tribe. It being already the sixth day, Saul sent to apprise the citizens of Jabesh Gilead of the help which was preparing for them, and which they might expect to receive on the morrow, being the very day they were to surrender their eyes to the Ammonites.

Accordingly, in the morning, the king, having marched all night, appeared before Jabesh, at the head of his army, invested the camp of the Ammonites, and falling upon them on three different sides, overthrew them with a great slaughter. So complete was the rout, that those who escaped were so broken and dispersed that no two could be found together.

Saul in this action displayed a large measure of those heroic qualities which the ancient nations most desired their monarchs to possess. Considering all the circumstances, the promptitude and energy of his decision, the speed with which he collected an immense army and brought it into action, and the skill and good military conduct of the whole transaction, there are probably few operations of the Hebrew history which more recommend themselves to the respect and admiration of a modern soldier. Its effect was not lost upon the people, who joyfully recognised in their king the qualities which have generally been held most worthy of rule; and so much was their enthusiasm excited, that they began to talk of putting to death the small minority who had refused to recognise his sovereignty. But Samuel interposed to prevent an act unbecoming a day in which "the Lord had wrought salvation in Israel." So harsh a proceeding would also have been rather likely to provoke than allay the disaffection of the leading tribes.

Samuel then invited the army, which comprehended in fact the effective body of the Hebrew people, to proceed to Gilgal, there solemnly to confirm the kingdom to Saul, seeing that now his claims were undisputed by any portion of the people. This was done with great solemnity, and with abundant sacrifices of peace and joy.

But lest this solemnity, which was obviously designed to remind the people of their continued dependence on Jehovah, should be construed into an approbation and sanction of all their proceedings, the prophet took this public occasion of reminding them that their proceeding had been most unpleasing to their Divine King; although, if they maintained their fidelity to him and to the principles of the theocracy, some of the evil consequences might be averted. He also neglected not the opportunity of justifying

* See before, p. 195.

his own conduct and the purity of his administration. He challenged assembled Israel to produce one instance of oppression, fraud, or corruption on his part, while he had been their sole judge; and in that vast multitude not one voice was raised to impugn his integrity and uprightness. He then proceeded to remind them of their past transgressions, in forgetting or turning astray from their God, with the punishments which had invariably followed, and the deliverances which their repentance had procured; showing them, by these instances, the sufficiency of their Divine Sovereign to rule them, and to save them from their enemies, without the intervention of an earthly king, whom they had persisted in demanding. And he assured them that, under their regal government, public sins would not cease to be visited with public calamities. To add the greater weight to his words, and to evince the Divine displeasure, the commissioned prophet called down thunder and rain from heaven, then at the usual season of wheat harvest, when the air is usually, in that country, serene and cloudless. On this the people were greatly alarmed at the possible consequences of the displeasure they had provoked, and besought Samuel to intercede for them. The prophet kindly encouraged them to hope that if they continued to trust faithfully in God, all would yet be well; and he assured them of continued intercession on their behalf, and of his services as a civil judge or teacher,—for that the omission would be a sin on his own part.

Saul, now fully established as king, dismissed his numerous army; but he retained 3000 of their number, 2000 of which he stationed at Michmash and Bethel, under his own immediate orders, while the other thousand were at Gibeah of Benjamin, under his eldest son Jonathan. Josephus says that these formed the body-guard of himself and his son. If so, he began very soon to act "like the kings of the nations," and to fulfil one part of the predictions of Samuel as to the course which the kingdom was likely to take. Even supposing (as we rather do) that he retained this force to be in readiness for the smaller military operations which he had in view, it is evident that he had already taken the idea of a standing army, the nucleus of which this body of 3000 men may be deemed to have formed. At all events, it may seem as an early indication of Saul's subsequently besetting public sin, of forgetting his properly vice-regal character, and his subordination to the Divine King. It was assuredly a new thing in Israel, and does savour somewhat of a distrust of God's providence, by which the peculiar people had hitherto been protected and delivered in every time of need; as well as of an affectation of that independent authority which "the kings of the nations" took to themselves. However, as the character of Saul seems to be held generally in more disesteem than the writers of his history intended, we shall not impute blame to him where the Scripture does not; but are ready to allow that, under all the circumstances, the measure was prudent and proper; for it appears that an enemy was then actually present in the country, whose expulsion the king had then in view. There were garrisons of the Philistines in the land. How this came to pass is not very clear. It would seem, however, that in resigning their conquests after their last defeat, they had retained some hill fortresses, from which they knew the Hebrews would find it difficult to dislodge them; and that when they recovered from the blow which was then inflicted upon their power, they contrived, by the help of this hold which they had in the country, to bring the southern tribes (at least those of Judah and Benjamin) under a sort of subjection. Thus when Saul was returning home after having been privately anointed by Samuel at Ramah, and met the sons of the prophets at Gibeah, we learn that at that place was "a garrison of the Philistines." And now we further learn that the Hebrews had in fact been disarmed by that people. According to that jealous policy of which other examples will ultimately be offered, they had even removed all the smiths of Israel, lest they should make weapons of war; in consequence of which the Hebrews were obliged to resort to the Philistines whenever their agricultural implements needed any other sharpening

than that which a grindstone could give; and as this was an unpleasant alternative, even these important instruments had been suffered to become blunt at the time to which we are now come; and so strict had been the deprivation of arms that, in the military operations which soon after followed, no one of the Israelites, save Saul and his eldest son, was possessed of a spear or sword.

This was the state of southern Palestine, where Jonathan, acting doubtless by the orders of his father, attacked and overcame with his thousand men the Philistine garrison in Gibeah. Encouraged by this success, Saul caused open war to be proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, against the Philistines, and to assert his authority over the tribes beyond Jordan, who were but too apt to regard their interests as separate from those of the other tribes, and who might think themselves exempt from taking part in a war against a people whose oppressions had not extended to themselves,—Saul directed the proclamation to be made not only "throughout all the land," but in a special manner it included those beyond Jordan. They did not disobey; but came with other Israelites, from all quarters, to the standard of the king at Gilgal. The people generally, though destitute of proper military weapons, were much inspirited by the success of Jonathan, and by their confidence in the now tried valour and military conduct of the king.

Meanwhile the Philistines were not heedless of this movement among the Israelites. No sooner did they hear of the defeat of their garrison in Gibeah than they assembled a formidable force, which seemed sufficient to overwhelm all opposition. It was composed of 30,000 chariots of war*, 6000 horsemen, and "people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude." The enthusiasm of the disarmed Israelites evaporated in the presence of this powerful force; and the army of Saul diminished every day, as great numbers of the men stole away to seek refuge in caves, in woods, in rocks, in towers, and in pits.

Saul had exhibited his inability of understanding his true position, or his disposition to regard himself as an independent sovereign, by entering upon or provoking this war without consulting, through Samuel or the priest, the Divine will. Although not formally so declared, it was the well-understood practice of the Hebrew constitution, that no war *against any other than the doomed nations of Canaan* would be undertaken without the previous consent and promised assistance of the Great King. Yet Saul, without any such authority, had taken measures which were certain to produce a war with the Philistines. He probably thought that the aggressions of the Philistines, and their existing position as the oppressors of Israel, and their intrusion into the Hebrew territory, made his undertaking so obviously just and patriotic as to render a direct authorisation superfluous, as its refusal could not be supposed: nor are we quite sure that in this he was mistaken. Be this as it may, Samuel was not willing that such a precedent should be established; and therefore he had appointed to meet Saul on a particular day at Gilgal, to offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and to show him what he should do, that is, both to propitiate the Lord, as on other occasions, and to advise Saul how to act in carrying on the war. On the appointed day Samuel did not arrive as soon as the king expected. The prophet probably delayed his coming on purpose to test his fidelity and obedience. Saul failed in this test. Seeing his force hourly diminishing by desertions; and, in the pride of his fancied independence, considering that he had as much right as the Egyptian and other kings to perform the priestly functions, he ordered the victims to be brought, and offered them himself upon the altar. This usurpation of the priestly office by one who had no natural authority as an Aaronite, nor any special authorisation as a prophet, was decisive of the character and the fate of Saul. If the principles of the theocracy were to be preserved, and if the political supremacy of Jehovah was at all to be maintained, it was indispensably necessary that the first manifestation by the kings of autocratic dispositions and of self-willed

* See note in 'Pictorial Bible,' 1 Sam. ch. xiii. v. 5, for some remarks as to this extraordinary number of chariots.

assumption of superiority to the law, should be visited by severe examples of punishment; for if not checked in the beginnings, the growth would have been fatal to the constitution. It will hence appear that the punishments which Saul incurred for this and other acts manifesting the same class of dispositions, were not so disproportioned to his offences, or so uncalled for by the occasions of the state, as some persons have been led to imagine.

Saul had scarcely made an end of offering his sacrifices before he was apprised of the approach of Samuel, and went forth to meet him. The apology he made to the prophet for what he had done,—that his force was diminishing, and that he was afraid that if he delayed any longer the Philistines would fall upon him before sacrifices had been offered to Jehovah—showed little of that reliance upon the Divine King, which every Hebrew general was expected to manifest; and but little anxiety to receive those prophetic counsels which Samuel had promised to deliver. Under nearly similar circumstances, how different was the conduct of Gideon, who gained immortal honour by those theocratic sentiments which enabled him to leave to his successors a memorable example of confidence in God! Samuel saw through the hollowness of Saul's apology, and warned him that by such sentiments as he entertained, and such conduct as he manifested, he was rendering himself unworthy to be the founder of a royal house, inasmuch as he could not become a pattern to his successors; and that by persevering in such a course he would compel the appointment of one more worthy than himself to reign over Israel, and to be the father of a kingly race. Samuel then retired from Gilgal, leaving Saul to carry on, as he saw best, the war he had undertaken.

On numbering his remaining force, Saul found that but 600 men remained with him. With a force less than this, enemies as formidable as the Philistines had in former times been defeated. But Saul, entirely overlooking, or distrusting, that Divine assistance which every Hebrew leader in a just war was entitled to expect, and, regarding only the disparity of his force, felt that it would be imprudent to engage or oppose so vast an army with a mere handful of disheartened men. He therefore retired from the field, and threw himself into the re-conquered fortress of Gibeah. On discovering his retreat, the Philistines sent three powerful detachments in different directions to ravage the country, while the main body of their army still remained encamped near Michmash.

In this extremity an entire change was wrought in the aspect of affairs through the daring valour of Jonathan. Accompanied only by his armour-bearer, he withdrew secretly from the camp, and, by climbing, opened himself a passage to one of the outposts of the Philistines, upon the summit of a cliff, deemed inaccessible, and therefore not very strongly guarded; and, penetrating to the enemy by so new and unexpected a path, he killed the advanced pickets, and, supported by his follower, slew all whom his hand encountered, and bore disorder and alarm into the camp of the Philistines, then much weakened by the detachments we have mentioned. The cries which arose from this part of the camp confounded and terrified the more distant parts; so that, aware of the presence of an enemy, which yet did not appear to them, they turned their arms against one another, and destroyed themselves with the blind fury of despairing men. The clamour which arose in the Philistine camp was heard by the Israelites. Saul at first was willing to go through the form of consulting the Lord by *urim;* but the confusion increasing in the Philistine camp, he deemed it a time for action rather than counsel; and directing the priest to forbear, he hastened to join his valiant son, whose absence was now known, and to whom this disorder was rightly attributed. The enemy were already flying in all directions, and Saul, with his small band, committed terrible havoc upon the fugitives. While thus engaged, his force increased with still greater rapidity than it had previously diminished; for not only did the Hebrew captives take the opportunity of making their escape and joining their king, but great numbers came

forth from their lurking-places to join in the pursuit; so that Saul soon found himself at the head of 6000 men. The rash and inconsiderate king, in his determination to make the most of his advantage, laid an interdictive curse upon any of his people who should taste food until the evening. Not only were the pursuers weakened and exhausted by the strict abstinence thus enjoined, but Jonathan, unaware of this interdict, unwittingly transgressed it, by tasting a little wild honey which he met with in his way through a forest.

In the evening the famished people, being then released from the interdict, flew ravenously upon the prey of cattle, and, in their impatience, began to devour the raw and living flesh. This being a transgression of the law, which forbade meat, not properly exsanguinated, to be eaten, Saul, who was really rather zealous to observe the law when it did not interfere with his own objects, interposed, and ordered the meat to be properly and legally slaughtered and prepared for food.

The people being now refreshed, Saul proposed to continue the pursuit during the night, but deemed it prudent first to consult the Lord, through the priest. No answer was given. This Saul interpreted to intimate that his solemn interdict had been transgressed, and, again unreasoning and rash, he swore that even were the transgressor his own son Jonathan, he should surely be put to death. It was Jonathan: the lot determined this. His father told him he must die; but the people, full of admiration of the young prince, protested that not a hair of his head should suffer damage, and thus saved his life.

This campaign, although concluded without a battle, was not the less productive of durable advantage. The glory which Saul acquired by it strengthened his authority among his own people, and henceforth no enemy to which he could be opposed seemed invincible to him. We see him, indeed, waging war, in turn, against Moab, Ammon, and Edom, and against the Amalekites and the Philistines; and in whatever direction he turned his arms, he obtained the victory and honour. Valiant himself, he esteemed valour in others; and whenever he discovered a man of ability and courage, he endeavoured to draw him near to himself, and to attach him to his person. The qualities most prized by Saul were eminently possessed by his own cousin Abner, and he became "captain of the host," or generalissimo of the army of Israel.

The several expeditions of Saul against the enemies of Israel took up, at intervals, the space of five or six years. During these years, Samuel, without further interference in political affairs, continued to watch the civil interests of the people, and to administer justice between them. The authority which he still preserved in Israel was very great, and probably not considerably less than it had been at any former time.

About the tenth or eleventh year of Saul's reign, God made known to the prophet that the iniquity of the Amalekites had now reached its height, and that the time was fully come when the old sentence of utter extermination should be executed. Saul was charged with its execution; and his commission, as delivered to him by Samuel, was expressed in the most absolute terms, and left the king no option to spare aught that breathed. Under this supreme order, the king made a general call upon all the tribes, which brought together an army of 200,000 men, among whom there were but 10,000 men of Judah. The deficiency of that tribe in supplying its due proportion is probably not noticed by the historian on this and on a former occasion, without some object; and that object probably was to convey the intimation that since the sceptre had been of old promised to that tribe, it was discontented at the government of Saul, and less hearty than the other tribes in its obedience.

The king led his army into the territory of Amalek. There he made the most able disposition of his forces, seized the most favourable positions, and then turned his advantages against the enemy. A general action followed, in which the Israelites were victorious, and they pursued the Amalekites to their most distant and last retreats. Agag,

the king, was taken alive with all his riches. Blinded by his ambition and his avarice to the danger of acting in defiance of a most positive and public command from God himself, Saul determined to spare the life of Agag, and to preserve the most valuable parts of all the booty from destruction; but with a most insulting or weak mockery of obedience, "everything that was vile and refuse, that they utterly destroyed." He then led home his triumphant army, and paused in the land of Eastern Carmel*, where he erected a monument of the most important and distant expedition in which he had hitherto been engaged. He then passed on to Gilgal. Samuel came to him there soon after his arrival, and at once charged him with his disobedience. Saul behaved with a degree of confusion and meanness which we should scarcely have expected from him, and which the consciousness of wrong-doing only can explain. He affirmed and persisted that he *had* obeyed the Divine command, when everything before and around him evinced that he had not. In the end he confessed that he had acted wrong; but then excused himself by laying one part of it on the zeal of the people to sacrifice the best of the cattle to Jehovah, and part to his own fear of restraining them from it. It was a great grief to Samuel to hear the king of Israel betray such meanness of soul, in palliating an unjustifiable action; and, conceding the truth of the latter statement, he asked with severity, "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams." He then continued authoritatively, as a prophet, to announce his rejection from being the founder of a royal house, as the fixed purpose of the Divine King whose imperative commands he had publicly disobeyed, or assumed a power of dispensing with, to such an extent as suited his convenience. It would be wrong to consider this as the sole act or omission for which this rejection was incurred. It was but one of many acts by which he indicated an utter incapability of apprehending his true position, and in consequence manifested dispositions and conduct utterly at variance with the principles of government which the welfare of the state, and, indeed, the very objects of its foundation, made it most essential to maintain. Unless the attempts at absolute independence made by Saul were checked, or visited with some signal mark of the Divine displeasure, the precedents established by the first king were likely to become the rule to future sovereigns. And hence the necessity, now at the beginning, of peculiar strictness, or even of severity, for preventing the establishment of bad rules and precedents for future reigns.

Saul at first betrayed more anxiety about present appearances than ultimate results; and he entreated Samuel to remain, and honour him in the sight of the people, by joining with him in an act of worship to Jehovah. Samuel refused; and as he turned to go away, the king caught hold of the skirt of his robe to detain him, with such force, that the skirt was rent off. So hath God, said the prophet, "rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine who is better than thou. Nor will *He who gives victory to Israel* lie or repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent." The expression which we have here particularly indicated was probably intended and understood as a further rebuke for the triumphal monument which Saul had erected in Carmel, and whereby he seemed to claim to himself that honour for the recent victory which, under the principles of the theocracy, was due to God only. Samuel, however, complied with the earnest wish of the king, and returned with him to the camp. There acting on the stern injunction which Saul had neglected, the prophet commanded the king of the Amalekites, by whose sword many mothers in Israel had been made childless, to be put to death. When the prophet and the king separated, the former proceeded to his usual residence at Ramah, and went no more to

* On the south-western borders of the Dead Sea, and which we call "Eastern Carmel" to distinguish it from "Mount Carmel," which lies westward, on the Mediterranean.

see Saul to the day of his death. Yet as he had a great regard for a man who, with all his faults, had many good natural qualities which would well have fitted him for rule in a simple human monarchy, and who, moreover, was faithful and even zealous for Jehovah, as his God, however deficient in obedience to him as his King, the prophet continued long to mourn greatly for him, and to bewail the doom which it had been his painful duty to declare.

After fifteen years, the Lord rebuked Samuel for this useless repining, and commanded him to proceed to Bethlehem, there to anoint the man worthier than Saul, whom he had chosen to fill his forfeited place, and to become the founder of a royal house. This was a delicate mission; for Samuel knew enough of Saul to fear that he would not scruple to put even himself to death if the fact came to his knowledge. He therefore veiled his real object under the form of a public sacrifice, which, in his prophetic character, he had a right to enjoin. That he still retained his authority as civil judge is evinced by the alarm which his unexpected visit occasioned to the elders of Bethlehem, who "trembled" at his coming, for fear it should be not "peaceably," but in judgment.

The family to which Samuel was sent was that of Jesse, the grandson of Boaz and Ruth, and, as such, a person of consideration in that place. Jesse was the father of eight sons, all of whom were present in Bethlehem, save the youngest, David by name, who was abroad with his father's flock. The whole family was invited by the prophet to be present at his sacrifice. Samuel knew that the destined king was to be found among Jesse's sons, but knew not as yet for which of them that distinction was intended. Still influenced by those general prepossessions in favour of such personal qualities as he had formerly beheld in Saul with complacency and admiration, Samuel no sooner beheld the commanding and stately figure of Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, than he concluded that "the Lord's anointed was before him." For this he received the striking rebuke, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." It further appeared that no one of the other sons of Jesse then present was the object of the Divine choice. On this, Samuel, with some surprise, asked Jesse whether he had other sons; and learning that the youngest, a mere youth of fifteen years old, was abroad in the fields, he caused him to be sent for. When he arrived, Samuel was struck by his uncommonly handsome appearance, especially by a freshness of complexion unusual in that country, and by the singular fire and beauty of his eyes. The Divine choice was at once intimated to him, "Arise, anoint him: for this is he!" As in the case of Saul himself, this precious anointing was significant only of the Divine intention and choice. As Saul had returned to his fields, so David returned to his flock. The path to the throne was to be opened by circumstances which did not yet appear. The anointing was the sign and seal of an ultimate intention. For the present David was not more a king, nor Saul less one, than before.

The doom of exclusion had been pronounced upon Saul at a time when he was daily strengthening himself on the throne, and increasing in power, popularity, and fame; and when his eldest son, Jonathan, stood, and deserved to stand, so high in the favour of all the people, that no man could, according to human probabilities, look upon any one else as likely to succeed him in the throne. But when the excitement of war and victory had subsided, and the king had leisure to consider and brood over the solemn and declaredly irrevocable sentence which the prophet had pronounced, a very serious effect was gradually produced upon his mind and character; for he was no longer prospered and directed by God, but left a prey to his own gloomy mind. The consciousness that he had not met the requirements of the high vocation to which, when he was little in his own sight, he had been called, together with the threatened loss of his dominion and the possible destruction of his house, made him jealous, sanguinary, and irritable, and occasionally threw him into

fits of the most profound and morbid melancholy. This is what, in the language of Scripture, is called "the evil spirit" that "troubled him." That it was not a case of demoniacal possession, as some have been led by this form of expression to suppose, is obvious from the effects to which we shall presently advert. Nor was it needful; for, as acting upon the character of man, earth contains not a more evil spirit than the guilty or troubled mind abandoned to its own impulses.

Not long after David had been anointed by Samuel, the mental malady of Saul gathered such strength—the fits of his mad melancholy became so long and frequent, that some remedial measures appeared necessary. Remembering that Saul had always been remarkably sensible to the influence of sweet sounds, it occurred to his friends that it might be attended with good effects, were an able musician retained at court, to play before the king, when his fits of gloom and horror came upon him. Saul himself approved of this advice, and directed that a person with the suitable qualifications should be sought. This reminded one of the courtiers how skilfully and sweetly he had heard the youngest son of Jesse play upon the harp; and in mentioning this to the king he also took occasion to commend David as a young man of known valour, prudent in conduct, and very comely in his person. From this and other corroborative circumstances, it is easy to perceive that music was now, and much earlier, cultivated by the Hebrews as a private accomplishment and solace. It formed their most usual relaxation, and divided their time with the labours of agriculture and the care of flocks.

The report which he had heard engaged Saul to send to Jesse, demanding his son David. The old man accordingly sent him to court, together with such a present to the king as the customs of the age—and of the east in all ages, required as an homage. It consisted of a quantity of bread, a skin-bottle of wine, and a kid.

Thus, in the providence of God, an opening was made for David, whereby he might become acquainted with the manners of the court, the business of government, and the affairs and interests of the several tribes, and was put in the way of securing the equally important advantage of becoming extensively known to the people. These were training circumstances for the high destinies which awaited him. Saul himself, ignorant that in him he beheld the "man worthier than himself," on whom the inheritance of his throne was to devolve, contributed to these preparations. He received the youthful minstrel with fervour; and, won by his engaging disposition and the beauties of his mind and person, not less than by the melody of his harp, became much attached to him. The personal bravery of David, also, did not long remain unnoticed by the veteran hero, who soon elevated him to the honourable and confidential station of his armour-bearer—having obtained Jesse's consent to allow his son to remain in attendance upon him. His presence was a great solace and relief to Saul; for whenever he fell into his fits of melancholy, David played on his harp before him; and its soft and soothing strains soon calmed his troubled spirit, and brought peace to his soul.

In the twenty-six years which had passed since the signal overthrow of the Philistines at Michmash, that people had recruited their strength, and at last* deemed themselves able to wipe out the disgrace they then incurred, and to recover their previous superiority over the Israelites. They recommenced the war by invading the territory of Judah: Saul marched against them; and the two armies encamped in the face of each other, on the sides of opposite mountains which a valley separated. While thus stationed the Hebrews were astonished and terrified to behold a man of enormous stature, between nine and ten feet high, advance from the camp of the Philistines attended by his armour-bearer. His name was Goliath. He was arrayed in complete mail, and armed with weapons proportioned to his bulk. He stood forth between the hosts, and, as authorized by the Philistines, who were confident that his match could

* B.C. 1030, five years after the anointing of David.

not be found, proposed, with great arrogance of language, that the question of tribute and servitude should be determined by the result of a single combat between himself and any champion which might be opposed to him. The Israelites were quite as much dismayed at the appearance of Goliath, and at the proposal which he made, as the Philistines could have expected, or as the Philistines themselves would have been under the same circumstances. No heart in Israel was found stout enough to dare the encounter with this dreadful Philistine; nor was any man then present willing to take on his single arm the serious consequences of the possible result. Then finding that no one of riper years or higher pretensions offered himself to the combat, David presented himself before Saul, whom he attended as his armour-bearer, and said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." But Saul told him that he was unequal to such a contest, "for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." The reply of David was equally forcible and modest:—Thy servant tended his father's flock; and when there came a lion or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, then I pursued him and smote him, and snatched it from his mouth; and if he rose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him. Both lions and bears hath thy servant smitten, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them. Let me go and smite him, and take away the reproach from Israel; for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the hosts of the living God? He added, "Jehovah who delivered me from the power of lions and bears will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul had been too little accustomed to this mode of speaking and feeling not to be struck by it. Although he had himself not been prone to exhibit *military* confidence in God, he perceived that such a confidence now supplied the only prospect of success; he therefore said, "Go; and may Jehovah be with thee!" He would fain have arrayed him in his own complete armour; but David rejected this as an incumbrance, and stepped lightly forward in his ordinary dress, and without sword or shield, or spear, having only in his right hand a sling—with the use of which early pastoral habits had made him familiar—and in his left a little bag, containing five smooth pebbles picked up from the small brook that then meandered and still meanders through the valley of Elah. The giant was astonished, and felt insulted that a mere youth should be sent forth to contend with so redoubted a champion as himself; and availing himself of the pause which the ancient champions were wont to take to abuse, threaten, and provoke each other, he cried, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" He then cursed him by his god, and, like the old Homeric heroes, threatened to give his flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field. David's reply, conceived in the finest and truest spirit of the theocracy, at once satisfies us that we behold in him the man fit to reign over the peculiar people. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will Jehovah deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; *that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.* And all this assembly shall know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hands." On this the enraged giant strode forward; and David hastened to fit a stone to his sling; and he flung it with so true an aim that it smote the Philistine in the only vulnerable part that was not cased in armour, his forehead, and buried itself deep in his brain. He then ran and cut off the monster's head with his own sword, thus fulfilling the prediction he had just uttered. A few minutes after he had gone forth, he returned, and laid the head and sword of the giant at the feet of Saul.

The overthrow of their champion struck a panic into the Philistines. They fled, and were pursued with great slaughter, even to their own country, by the Israelites, who then returned and plundered their camp.

The honour which David won by this splendid achievement was too great for his safety. Saul could not but feel that the sort of spirit by which the youthful hero had been actuated was precisely that which on many preceding occasions he himself *ought* to have manifested, and for not doing which the doom of exclusion had been pronounced against him. The feeling that David was really the hero of the recent fight, was also not pleasant to one so jealous of his military glory. And when the women came forth from their towns to greet the returning conquerors with their instruments of music, and sang responsively to their tabrets and their viols,—

"Saul has smitten his thousands,
But David has his ten thousands slain,"

the indignation of the king was provoked to the utmost. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me but thousands: what can he have more," he said, "but the kingdom?" It would therefore seem that this preference of David to him by the women in their songs first suggested to him the possibility that he was the man, worthier than himself, who was destined to succeed him and to supersede his descendants: and the notion having once occurred, he probably made such inquiries as enabled him to conclude or to discover that such was the fact. His knowledge of it appears soon after; and we know that from this time forward David became the object, not merely of his envy and jealousy, but of his hatred and dislike. Yet he was afraid, if he as yet wished, to do him any open injury; but as he could not bear him any longer in his former close attendance about his person, he threw him more into the *public* service, intrusting to him the command of a thousand men. From his subsequent expressions and conduct, it seems likely that the king expected that the inexperience of youth might lead David into such errors in this responsible public station as would either give him occasion to act against him, or would seriously damage his character with the people. But if such were his views, they were grievously disappointed. In his public station "David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and Jehovah was with him;" and the opportunity which was given him only served to evince his talents for business and his attention to it; and, consequently, to increase and establish that popularity among the people which his character and exploits had already won. And so it was, that the dislike and apprehensions of Saul increased in proportion to the abilities and discretion which David evinced, and to the popularity which he acquired.

The king was under the full operation of those feelings, which as yet he durst not avow, when he happened to learn that his daughter Michal had become attached to David. This was far from displeasing him, as he thought it gave him an opportunity of entrapping the son of Jesse to his own destruction. He promised her to him; but on the condition of so difficult an enterprise against the Philistines, as he fully expected would ensure his death. But David, always victorious, returned in a few days with more numerous pledges of his valour than the king had ventured to demand; and he was then married to Michal, who could not with any decency be refused to him.

In some subsequent actions against the Philistines, with whom a desultory warfare was still carried on, David displayed such courage and military skill as greatly increased his renown in Israel, and increased in the same proportion the animosity of Saul. His hate became at last so ungovernable, that he could no longer confine the dark secret to his own bosom, or limit himself to underhand attempts against the life of Jesse's son. He avowed it to his son Jonathan and to his courtiers, charging them to take any favourable opportunity of putting him to death. He knew not yet of the strong attachment which subsisted between Jonathan and David—that his noble son, rising far above all selfishness, pride, or

envy, loved the son of Jesse even "as his own soul." He heard the command with horror, and apprised David of it, counselling him to hide himself until he should have an opportunity of remonstrating on the subject privately with the king. This he did with such effect, displaying the services and fidelity of David with such force, that the better reason of Saul prevailed for the time, and he solemnly swore to make no further attempt against his life.

But not long after, all the evil passions of Saul were again roused by the increased renown which David obtained, by a splendid victory over the Philistines. He had scarce returned to court before he had a narrow escape of being pinned to the wall by a javelin which the king threw at him in one of those fits of frenzied melancholy, which the son of Jesse was at that moment endeavouring to sooth by playing on his harp.

David then withdrew to his own house. But the king had now committed himself, and henceforth threw aside all disguise or restraint. He sent some of his attendants to watch the house; and David would undoubtedly have been murdered the next morning, had not his faithful wife managed his escape during the night, by letting him down in a basket through one of the windows. In the morning, when the man demanded admittance with the intention of slaying her husband, Michal told them he was very ill and confined to his bed; and in proof of it showed them the bed, in which she had placed a figure made up so as to present the appearance of a body covered with the bed-clothes. This news they carried to the king, who sent them back with orders to bring him alive in his bed. By this means Michal's artifice was discovered, and her father was so enraged, that, for her own safety, she made him believe that it was to save her own life she had consented to it.

As the only revenge then in his power, Saul took away Michal, and gave her in marriage to another; and the story which she had made up, that David had put her in fear of her life, probably precluded her from making that strenuous opposition which she might otherwise have done.

David himself escaped to Ramah, where he acquainted Samuel with all the king's behaviour to him. Samuel took him to Naioth, which seems to have been a kind of school or college of the prophets, in the neighbourhood of Ramah, over which Samuel presided. Saul soon heard where he was; and so reckless was he now become, and so madly bent on his murderous object, that he would not respect even this asylum, but sent messengers to bring David to him. These, when they beheld the company of prophets, with Samuel at their head, "prophesying," or singing hymns, fell into an ecstasy, and "prophesied" in like manner. The same happened to a second and a third party. At last Saul determined to go himself; and in his rage he probably intended to slay Samuel also for sheltering David. Indeed, that the youth had gone to Samuel, and was sheltered by him, must have confirmed his conviction that David was his appointed successor, if he did not yet know, as he probably did, that the son of Jesse had actually been anointed by the prophet. But no sooner had the king beheld what had so strongly affected his messengers, than he also, as had happened to him in his happier days, "prophesied," and lay in an ecstatic trance, divested of his outer garment, all that day and night.

This gave David an opportunity to leave the neighbourhood; and he repaired to Gibeah, where the king resided, and where Jonathan then was, to seek a private interview with that valuable friend. Jonathan thought himself fully acquainted with all the intentions of his father, and would not believe that he really designed the death of David. But the latter was well assured of it; and thought that Saul, having become acquainted with their friendship, had concealed his full purpose from Jonathan. It was, however, agreed between them that the conduct of the king on an approaching occasion, should be deemed to determine his ultimate intentions; and that meanwhile David should keep himself concealed. The two friends then walked forth into the

fields. Jonathan then avowed to David his conviction that he, and not himself, was the destined successor of Saul; and, with rare generosity of spirit and abandonment of self, he expressed his cheerful assent to this, and only desired to receive the pledge of David that, if himself alive when he became king, protection should be granted to him from the designs which evil men might entertain; and that if not himself living, kindness should be extended to his family for his sake. This was a matter in which he might be allowed at this time to feel more than usual anxiety, as it appears, from a comparison of dates, that a son, Mephibosheth, had lately been born to him. Reciprocally, he would pledge himself to protect the life of David, to the extent of his power, from the designs of Saul and his other enemies. These things they swore before God to each other, and entered together into a covenant of peace and love.

It seems that by this time Saul lived in considerable state. At the recurrence of the new moons he was accustomed to entertain his principal officers at meat. Such a feast was now near at hand; and it appears that Saul, who knew that David had returned to Gibeah, expected that, notwithstanding what had passed, he would make his appearance at this feast, as it would seem that non-attendance was regarded as an offensive neglect. Most probably the king thought that David might regard the attempt which had been made upon his life as mere frenetic impulse, not indicative of any deliberate intention against him. The first day of the feast, the place which belonged to David at the king's table was vacant; but Saul then made no remark, thinking the absence might be accidental. But when the son of Jesse made no appearance on the second day, the king put some questions to Jonathan, who excused David's absence, alleging that it was by his permission and consent. On this Saul broke forth into the grossest abuse of Jonathan, and assuring him that his succession to the throne could never be secure while David lived, concluded with, "Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." And when Jonathan ventured to remonstrate, "Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" the maddened king threw his javelin to smite him. That he could thus treat his own son, on whom, in fact, all the hopes that remained to him were centred, lessens our wonder at his behaviour to David, and at the other acts of madness of which he was guilty. By this Jonathan knew that the king really intended to destroy his friend. He therefore took his bow, and went forth, attended by a lad, as if to shoot in the field where David lay hid; for it had been agreed upon between them that the manner in which the arrows were shot, and the expressions used by the archer to the lad who collected the arrows after they had been discharged, was to be a sign intimating to David the course he was to take; thus preventing the danger which might accrue to both from another interview. But when the unfavourable sign had been given, which he knew would render his friend a fugitive, Jonathan could not resist the desire again to commune with him before he departed. He therefore sent away the lad, and as soon as he was gone "David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded."

After taking leave of Jonathan, David took his journey westward, with the intention of putting himself beyond the reach of Saul, by going to the land of the Philistines, who were not at that time in actual hostilities with the Israelites, and with whom alone the enmity of Saul was not likely to operate to his disadvantage. In his way, attended by a few young men who were attached to him, he came to the town of Nob, belonging to the priests, about twelve miles from Gibeah, and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and Anathoth. To this place the tabernacle had at this time been removed. We are not made acquainted with the precise occasion of its removal from Shiloh; but it was probably consequent upon the destruction of that town in the war with the Philistines. At this place he

was received, as his rank and renown demanded, by the high-priest Ahimelech, whose surprise at seeing him he thought himself obliged to dispel, by the false and unseemly pretence that he had been sent by the king on private business of importance. But taking notice of the presence of one Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds, by whom he doubted not that he should be betrayed, he represented to Ahimelech that his business was urgent, and begged that he would supply some refreshment to himself and his men, after which he would continue his journey. The high-priest had nothing to offer but bread which had lain a week on the table of shew-bread in the sanctuary; and although by the priests only this might lawfully be eaten, he was induced by the alleged urgency of the occasion to give it to David and his men. David afterwards inquired for weapons; and was told there were none but the sword of Goliath, which, as a pious memorial of the victory over that proud blasphemer, had been deposited in the tabernacle. This at his desire was brought to him, and, having girded it on, he took leave of Ahimelech, and continued his journey till he reached the Philistine city of Gath, where he presented himself, or was brought, before Achish, the king of that place, or rather of the state of which that place was the denominating metropolis. It does not appear that David intended himself to be known; or if so, anticipated a more favourable reception: for when he found that he was recognised, and that the courtiers ominously represented him as that David to whom the maidens of Israel had in their songs ascribed the slaughter of tens of thousands of Philistines, and thousands only to Saul, dreading the result of such recollections, David feigned himself mad, with such success that Achish exclaimed, "Lo, ye see the man is mad; wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?" He was therefore allowed to go where he pleased. He delayed not to avail himself of this advantage, and hastened into the territory of his own tribe of Judah, where he found shelter in the cave of Adullam. He was here joined by his parents and family, who probably deemed themselves unsafe in Bethlehem; and as soon as his retreat became known in the neighbourhood, his reputation attracted to him a considerable number of men hanging loose upon society, as in the somewhat analogous case of Jephthah. To understand some of their future operations under David, it is quite necessary to give them just that character, and no other, which they bear in the Scriptural record, which states that every one that was in distress, every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about four hundred men."

From Adullam David took an opposite direction to that which he had first followed, and went into the land of Moab. Here he was well received; for the king consented to take the parents of the outcast under his protection, until the dawning of better days. They therefore remained among the Moabites until the troubles of their son ended with the life of Saul. But although he might himself have found greater safety in that land, it was important to his future interests that he should return to his own country, that his conduct, adventures, and persecutions there, might keep him alive in the minds and sympathies of the people. He did not himself plan anything with reference to the destination intended for him ultimately; but God, who best knew by what agencies to effect his purpose, sent the prophet Gad to command him to return into the land of Judah. He obeyed, and found shelter in the forest of Hareth.

Saul soon heard of David's return, and the place of his retreat, and was greatly troubled; for, as his safety could not be the object of this move from the security which Moab afforded, he inferred that he had returned with the intention of acting offensively and vindictively against him when occasion or advantage offered. He therefore called together the officers of his court; and as there

was not, as yet, any building or palace in which such assemblies could be held, the king sat upon a bank, under a tamarask-tree, with his spear in his hand. It seems that the persons present were chiefly Benjamites; and Saul, speaking as one distrustful of their fidelity, appealed to their selfish interests, asking on what grounds they, as Benjamites, could hope to be bettered by the son of Jesse; and complained that there were plots between him and his own son Jonathan, of which they knew, but that they were not sorry for him, nor would give any information to him. On this, Doeg, the Edomite, informed him of the assistance which David had received at Nob from the high-priest; but omitted to state, if he knew, the certainly false grounds on which that assistance had been claimed by David and given by the priest; and added, which was not true, that Ahimelech had "inquired of God" for him. On hearing this, Saul was highly enraged, and immediately sent for Ahimelech and all the priests of his family that were at Nob. When they arrived, the king fiercely charged him with his participation in what his jealous imagination tortured into a conspiracy of David against him. Ahimelech declared that he had entertained him merely as the king's son-in-law, and one employed on the king's business, and denied that he had consulted the sacred oracle on his behalf; but Saul, without listening to his statement, commanded his followers to slay them all. A dead stillness followed this order; and, finding that no one moved to obey it, the frantic king turned to Doeg and commanded him to fall upon them. The unscrupulous Edomite was ready in his obedience; and although the Israelites then present had refused to stain their own hands with the blood of the most sacred persons in the land, they had not sufficient spirit or principle to interpose in their behalf, but stood by and saw them slaughtered by Doeg and his myrmidons. Not fewer than eighty-five priests fell in this horrid massacre; and immediately after, Doeg—by Saul's order, of course—proceeded to Nob, and slew all that lived in it—man, woman, child, and beast. This was a further development of that judgment upon the house of Eli which had been pronounced of old; this was that deed in Israel of which it had been predicted that "both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." The only individual of the family of the high-priest who escaped, was Abiathar, one of his sons. This person repaired to David, who was deeply afflicted at the intelligence which he brought, and desired him to remain with him.

Soon after this David heard that a party of Philistines had come up against the border-town of Keilah, with the view of taking away the produce of the harvest which the people of that town had lately gathered in. He greatly desired to march his troop to the relief of that place; but his men who, as might be expected from their character, were by no means distinguished for their courage or subordination, declined so bold an enterprise. At last, a distinct promise of victory from the sacred oracle, consulted by Abiathar who acted as priest, encouraged their obedience. They went and obtained a complete victory over the Philistines, delivering Keilah from the danger by which it was threatened. This and other instances of David's readiness, in his own precarious situation, to employ his resources against the enemies of his country, must have tended much to raise his character among the people, and to keep him before the public eye.

He now entered and remained in the town he had relieved, which Saul no sooner understood than he exclaimed "God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars;" and he delayed not to call together a powerful force, which he marched to besiege that place. But David, being apprised by the oracle that the people of Keilah, unmindful of their obligation to him, would deliver him up to the king if he remained there until his arrival, withdrew from the place at the head of a force now increased to 600 men. When Saul heard this, he discontinued his march against Keilah.

David now sought shelter in the eastern part of Judea, towards the Dead Sea. There were strong posts and obscure retreats in

that quarter, among the mountains and the woods, to which he successively removed, as the motions of Saul dictated; for the king, now openly bent on his destruction, hastened to every place to which he heard that the son of Jesse had retreated, hunting him "like a partridge in the mountains." He was for some time in different parts of the wilderness of Ziph. He was sheltered by a wood in that wilderness, when Jonathan, becoming acquainted with his place of retreat, went to him to encourage him to trust in God. He said to him, "Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next to thee; *and that also Saul my father knoweth.*" Again the friends renewed their covenant before Jehovah, and parted —to meet no more. There is really nothing in all history finer than this love of Jonathan to David; it was, as the latter himself found occasion to describe it, "Wonderful, passing the love of women!" It was a noble spirit with which the son of the king held close to his heart, and admitted the superior claims of, the man destined to supersede him and his in the most splendid object of human ambition, which, on ordinary principles he might have considered his just inheritance. But his were not ordinary principles, such as swayed the mind and determined the conduct of his father. His were the true principles of the theocracy, whereby he knew that Jehovah was the true king of Israel, and cheerfully submitted to his undoubted right to appoint whom he would as his regent, even to his own exclusion; and, with generous humility, was the first to recognise and admire the superior qualities of the man on whom it was known that his forfeited destinies had fallen. Yet lest, in our admiration of Jonathan's conduct, human virtue should seem too highly exalted, it may be well to remember, that the hereditary principle in civil government was as yet without precedent among the Hebrews, with whom sons had not yet learned to look to succeed their fathers in their public offices. None of the judges had transmitted their authority to their sons or relatives: and the only instance in which an attempt had been made (by Abimelech) to establish this hereditary principle, had most miserably failed. But the friendship of Jonathan and David is a passage in the history of the Hebrew kingdom from which the mind reluctantly withdraws. If it occurred in a fiction, it would be pointed out as an example of most refined and consummate art, that the author represents to us in such colours of beauty and truth the person he intends to set aside, and allows him so largely to share our sympathies and admiration with the hero of his tale.

Not long after this, some inhabitants of Ziph went to Gibeah and acquainted the king with the quarter in which David lay hid. Saul was so transported with joy at the news, that he heartily blessed them as the only people who had compassion upon him in his trouble; for by this time, if not before, it seems that his morbid fancy had fully persuaded him that David was really engaged in a conspiracy to take his life, and place the crown upon his own head. But David had timely intelligence that his retreat was betrayed, and withdrew southward into the wilderness of Maon. But Saul pursued him thither, and, with the design to surround him, was already on one side of the mountain on the other side of which David lay, when he was providentially called off by intelligence of a sudden incursion into the country by the Philistines. He went and repulsed them; and then, at the head of three thousand men, returned to follow upon the tracks of Jesse's son—so inveterately was he now bent upon his fell purpose.

Meanwhile David had removed to the district of Engeddi, towards the south-western extremity of the Dead Sea, the caverns and rocky fastnesses of which offered many secure retreats. Saul pursued him into this region, and one day entered a large cave, to repose himself during the heat of the day. Now it happened that David and his men were already in this cave; but being in the remote and dark inner extremity, were unperceived by the king; but he, being between them and the light which entered at the cave's mouth, was seen and recognised by them. As he lay asleep, David's men joy-

fully congratulated him that his enemy was now completely in his power. But they knew not what manner of spirit was in the son of Jesse. "Jehovah forbid," he said to them, "that I should do this thing unto my master, the anointed of Jehovah, to stretch forth mine hand against him; seeing he is the anointed of Jehovah;" and the men were with difficulty restrained by these words from putting the king to death. But that he might know how completely his life had been in the hands of the man whose life he sought, David went and cut off the skirt of his mantle. Saul at length arose, and left the cave, and went his way. David went out and called after him, "My lord, the king!" When Saul turned, David bowed himself reverently towards the earth, and proceeded in the most respectful terms to remonstrate against the injustice with which he had been treated and the inveteracy with which he was pursued. He charitably imputed the designs laid to his charge to the suggestions of evil-minded men; and in proof of their utter groundlessness, related what had happened in the cave, and produced the skirt to show how entirely the king's life had been in his power. Saul's naturally good feelings were touched by this generous forbearance, from one who knew that his own life was then sought by him: "Is this thy voice, my son David!" he cried, and his softened heart yielded refreshing tears, such as he had not lately been wont to shed. That which had been in David a forbearance resulting from the natural and spontaneous impulse of his own feelings, seemed to the king an act of superhuman virtue, which forced upon him the recognition that he was indeed that "worthier" man to whom the inheritance of his crown had been prophesied. Rendering good for evil was a new thing to him; and now, in the regard and admiration which it excited, he freely acknowledged the conviction he entertained,—"And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now, therefore, unto me, by Jehovah, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house." The anxiety of the king, and even of Jonathan, on this point, seems to show (what has already appeared in the case of Abimelech) that it was even then, as it ever has been until lately, usual for oriental kings to remove by death all those whose claims to the throne might seem superior or equal to their own, or whose presence might offer an alternative to the discontented: the intense horror with which the Hebrews regarded the prospect or fear of genealogical extinction, also contributes to explain the anxiety which both Saul and Jonathan felt on this point more than on any other. David took the oath required from him; Saul then returned to Gibeah, and David, who had little confidence in the permanency of the impression he had made, remained in his strongholds.

Very soon after this Samuel died, at the advanced age of ninety-two years*, after he had judged Israel fifty years, that is, twelve years alone, and thirty-eight years jointly with Saul; for there is no doubt that he retained his authority as civil judge to the end of his life. The death of this good man was lamented as a common calamity by all true Israelites, who assembled in great numbers to honour his funeral. He was buried in the garden of his own house at Ramah.

As David immediately after removed much further southward, even into "the wilderness of Paran," it would seem that, having no confidence in Saul's fit of right feeling, he was fearful of the consequences of the absence of that degree of moral restraint upon him which had existed while the prophet lived. The southern country offers, in the proper season, excellent pastures, away to which those of Judah, who had large possessions of cattle, were wont to send their flocks during a part of the year. The advantage offered by the free use of these open pastures was, however, in some degree counterbalanced by the danger from the prowling Arab tribes with which they sometimes come in contact. David probably supported his men during the eight months of his stay in this region by acting against those tribes, and making spoil of their cattle. And as

* B.C. 1072.

their hand was against every man, it was natural that every man's hand should be against them; the rather, as we may be sure, from their general conduct, that they lost no occasions of oppressing or plundering the people inhabiting, or pasturing their flocks, along or near the southern frontier. Thus the presence of David's troop was, for that reason, a great advantage to the shepherds, as he had by this time secured sufficient control over his men to oblige them to respect the property of the Israelites. And this was, at least in the feelings of the people, no small thing in a body of men, living abroad with swords in their hands, and obliged, as they were, to collect their subsistence in the best way they could. Among those who were advantaged by this, none were more so than the shepherds of Nabal, a man of large possessions in Carmel. When David returned northward, he heard that Nabal was making great preparations for the entertainment of his people during the shearing of his 3000 sheep; and being then greatly pressed for provisions, he sent some of his young men to this person to salute him respectfully in his name, and to request some small supply out of the abundance he had provided. Now in point of fact, according to all usage, Nabal ought to have anticipated this request, as soon as he learned that one who had protected his property in the wilderness was then in his neighbourhood. But Nabal was "churlish and evil in his doings," and irritable as a dog. This character, his insulting answer to the message fully supported:—"Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? *There be many servants now-a-days that break away, every man from his master.* Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, which I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men whom I know not whence they be?" When this answer was brought back to David, he was highly enraged, and ordered his men to gird on their swords; and with 400 of them (leaving 200 to protect the baggage) he set forth with the rash and cruel purpose of destroying the churl and all that belonged to him. The provocation, although very great, and not likely to be overlooked by a military man, was certainly not such as to justify this barbarous design. Its execution was, however, averted by Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who is described as "a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance." Those shepherds who had been in the wilderness with the flocks, and were sensible of the value of that protection which David's troop had rendered, greatly disapproved of their master's conduct. They therefore reported the whole matter to their mistress, who appears to have had that real authority in the household which a woman of sense always has had in the house of even a brutal fool. She concurred in their apprehensions as to the probable consequences, and with a promptitude which bears out the character given to her, decided on the proper steps to avert them. While Nabal was eating and drinking, even to drunkenness, at the feast, she made up an elegant and liberal present, consisting of 200 loaves of bread, two skin-bottles of wine, five measures of parched corn, five sheep ready dressed, 200 clusters of raisins, and 200 cakes of figs; and having placed all this on asses, she set forth with suitable attendance to meet the enraged hero. She soon met him and his men, on full march to Carmel; and after rendering him her most respectful homage, she spoke to him with such fine tact and prudence, that his passion grew calm under her hand; and she convinced him that the deed which he contemplated would cause the weight of innocent blood to lie heavy on his conscience in after days. Being thus made to feel that he had allowed the bitterness of a blockhead's insult to sink too deeply in his soul, he felt really thankful that his fell purpose had been interrupted:—Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel," he said, "who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, who hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand."

Abigail returned to her husband and the next day acquainted him with the steps she had taken, and the imminent danger into which his churlishness had brought him and his. The view which was presented to his

mind of the evil which had hung over his head, struck him with such intense dread and horror, that in a few days he died of a broken heart. When this came to the ears of David, who had been much charmed by the good sense and beauty of Abigail, he sent to her, and she consented to become his wife. He had previously married Ahinoam of Jezreel, after Saul had given Michal to another. Polygamy was not expressly forbidden by the law; neither did it receive any sanction therefrom. It was a matter of existing usage with which the law did not interfere; although it discouraged the formation, by the kings, of such extensive harems as the kings of the East have been wont to possess; and both David and his son Solomon had ample occasion to lament those besotting passions which led them to neglect this injunction, as well as to learn that there is in this matter an obvious social law which cannot with impunity be transgressed. This there will be other occasions to show.

Soon after this David removed to his former place of shelter, in the wilderness of Ziph. While he remained there, Saul justified the doubts which the son of Jesse, who well knew his character, entertained of the continuance of his good resolutions; for he again came to seek him at the head of 3000 men. But this only gave David another opportunity of evincing the true and generous loyalty of his own character. For one night, while the king lay asleep, in the midst of his men, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, to mark the station of the chief, David entered his camp, attended by Abishai (brother to the subsequently celebrated Joab), and, without being noticed, penetrated to the very spot where the king lay. Abishai thought this a fine opportunity of ending all their troubles with the life of their persecutor; and begged David to permit him to transfix the sleeping king with his spear. But to the pious hero, "a divinely-appointed king, although his enemy, was a sacred person. To lay violent hands on him, and to open a way to the throne by regicide, was a crime which he justly abhorred. What God had promised him he was willing to wait for, till He who had promised should deliver it to him in the ordinary course of his providence."* He therefore checked the misdirected zeal of Abishai, and withdrew with him, taking away the spear which was planted at Saul's head, and the vessel of water which stood there for his use. David then went and stationed himself at the edge of an opposite cliff, overlooking the camp of Saul, and calling by name to Abner, the cousin and chief commander of the king, told him he was worthy of death for the careless manner in which he guarded the royal person. As he went on reproaching Abner, Saul, as he expected, recognised his voice, and guessing that he had again been spared when in his power, called out, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" and was answered, "It is my voice, my lord, O king!" David then proceeded with much energy, but in the most respectful language, to remonstrate against the treatment he received, and produced the evidence of the spear and water-jug, as evincing the value of the king's life in his eyes. The result was the same as it had been on a similar occasion before: Saul's heart was touched. He acknowledged that he had "played the fool, and had erred exceedingly;" and after blessing David, returned to Gibeah.

David had before this formed the intention of again withdrawing to the Philistines; for in his remonstrance with Saul he had laid the responsibility of this measure upon his persecutors,—"If Jehovah hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before Jehovah, for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of Jehovah." He must not be allowed, however, thus easily to rid himself of the responsibility of so ill-advised and desperate an expedient, in which he neglected to ask counsel of God, but followed the impulse of his own apprehensions; and from the natural and obvious consequences of which he could only escape by acts of equivocation, hypocrisy, and ingratitude which do no honour to his name. However, we are to regard David, in all this portion of his life, as a learner, as one who was in the course of

* Jahn, i. 103.

being trained to rule wisely, by various disciplines, distresses, and errors;—for even the errors of conduct into which men fall, by having placed themselves in a false position through too confident a reliance on their own judgment, are not among the least profitable experiences which they obtain, and which go towards the ripening of their minds. But, undoubtedly, it had been better for David, and more becoming, had he remained in his own country, relying upon the protection of that good providence by which he had hitherto been preserved.

On reaching Gath, with his 600 men, David was well received by the king, who appears to have been the same Achish in whose presence he had formerly played the madman. The Hebrew chief soon took occasion to request the Philistine king to assign him some town in which he might reside apart with his people; and the king, with generous and unsuspecting confidence, made over to him, to his full and exclusive possession, the small border town of Ziklag, which was situated not far from the brook Besor. Here he resided one year and four months, or until the death of Saul. From this place he undertook excursions against the ancient predatory enemies of Israel, the Amalekites, the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, who roved about in Arabia Petræa, on the sea-coast as far as Pelusium, and on the southern frontier of the tribe of Judah. In all these excursions he utterly destroyed man, woman, and child, and took possession of the cattle and apparel, of which their wealth consisted. The exterminating character which he gave to this warfare, was to prevent the Philistines from learning that he had been acting against their allies and friends; and he always pretended to Achish that his expedition had been against the Israelites and their allies, by which he established himself firmly in the confidence of that king. For the cool manner in which the son of Jesse poured out innocent blood to cover a deliberate and designing falsehood, we have no excuse to offer. He must bear the blame for ever.

In those days the Philistine states joined their forces for war against Israel; and David, having, by his pretences, impressed upon Achish the conviction that he now detested his own people and was detested by them, was driven to the dreadful alternative of either taking the field with the Philistines and fighting against his brethren, or else of appearing ungrateful to Achish, and perhaps of occasioning the destruction of his family and himself. But from this difficulty he was extricated by the not unreasonable jealousy of the other Philistine princes, who expected he might turn against them in the battle in order to reconcile himself to his master. Achish was much hurt at such suspicions against one on whom he so perfectly relied, but was reluctantly obliged to dismiss him from the expedition.

On returning to Ziklag, David found the city pillaged and reduced to ashes. The Amalekites, Geshurites, and Gezrites, had taken the opportunity of his absence in another direction thus to avenge themselves for his former inroads upon them. They did not, however, retaliate to the full extent; for although they took the men and women who were in it captive, "they slew not any. either great or small, but carried them away." David's two wives were among the captives. His men were frantic at the loss of their families and substance, and at first talked of stoning their leader, whom they regarded as at least the remote cause of this calamity. But they were at last appeased, and set out in pursuit of the spoilers, notwithstanding the fatigue occasioned by their previous march. Two hundred of the men were unable to proceed farther than the brook Besor; and David, leaving them there, continued the pursuit with the remaining four hundred. On their way they fell in with a man half dead with illness, hunger, and thirst. Having refreshed him with food and drink, they learned that he was an Egyptian, a slave to one of the party they pursued; but that having fallen ill three days before, his master had left him—to live or die, as might happen—and that since then no bread or water had passed his lips. He gave an account of the operations of the horde; and, when pressed, agreed to conduct the Hebrew party to the spot at

which he knew that they intended to repose. When that spot was reached, the nomades were enjoying themselves in full security, as they supposed themselves beyond the reach of pursuit, and could not know that David would have returned to Ziklag so soon. They were thus easily overthrown; and not only did the Hebrews recapture all that they had taken, but gained besides so considerable a booty, that David was enabled to send presents to all the rulers in Judah who were favourable to his cause.

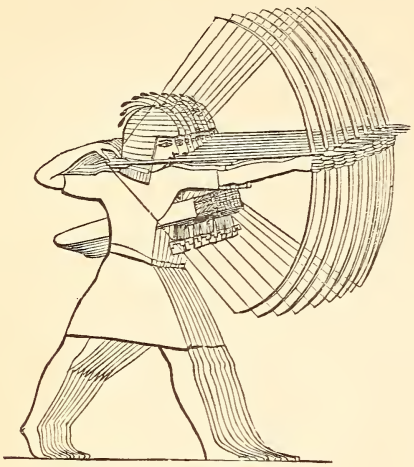
The 400 men who had continued the pursuit were unwilling to share the additional spoil with the 200 who had tarried by the brook Besor, although willing to restore their own property to them. But David took the opportunity of establishing the useful principle that all the persons engaged in an expedition should share equally, whatever part they took in it; or, in other words, that those whose presence protected the baggage should be equally benefited by a victory with those who went to the fight.

The present campaign of the Philistines against the Israelites was one of those large operations which nations can in general only undertake after long intervals of rest. There seems, indeed, during the reign of Saul, to have been always a sort of desultory and partial warfare between the two nations; but it had produced no measure comparable to this, which was intended to be decisive, and was calculated to tax to the utmost the resources of the belligerents. When Saul surveyed, from the heights of Gilboa, the formidable army which the Philistine had brought into the plain of Esdraelon—that great battle-field of nations—his heart failed him. Presentiments of coming events cast deep shadows over his troubled mind. He sought counsel of God. But God had forsaken him—left him to his own devices—and answered him "neither by dreams, nor by urim, nor by prophets."

The crimes of Saul arose from his disloyalty to Jehovah, in his reluctance to acknowledge Him as the true king of Israel. But as his God, he worshipped him, and had no tendency towards those idolatries by which so many subsequent kings were disgraced. All idolatry and idolatrous acts were discouraged and punished by him. In obedience to the law* he banished from the land all the diviners and wizards he could find. But now, in his dismay, he directed his attendants to find out a woman skilful in necromancy, that he might seek through her the information which the Lord refused to give. One was found at Endor, a town not far from the camp in Gilboa; and to her he repaired by night, disguised, with two attendants, and desired her to evoke the spirit of Samuel, that, in this dread emergency, he might ask counsel of him. Whatever might be the nature of the woman's art, and her design in undertaking to fulfil his wish,—whether she meant to impose on Saul by getting some accomplice to personate Samuel, who had only been dead two years, and whose person must have become well known to the Israelites during his long administration,—or whether she expected a demoniacal spirit to give him an answer; it appears from a close examination of the text, that, to the great astonishment of the woman herself, and before she had time to utter any of her incantations, the spirit of Samuel was permitted to appear, in a glorified form, and ominously clad in that mantle in which was the rent that signified the rending of the kingdom from the family of Saul. When the figure appeared, the king *knew* that it was Samuel, and bowed himself to the ground before him. From that awful and passionless form he heard that the doom declared long since was *now* to be accomplished;—to-morrow Israel should be given up to the sword of the Philistines—to-morrow Saul and his sons should be numbered with the dead. At these heavy tidings, the king fell down as one dead, for he had touched no food that night or the preceding day, and was with difficulty restored to his senses and refreshed by the woman and his attendants.

The next day all that had been foretold was accomplished. Israel fled before the Philistine archers; and Saul and his sons, unable to stem the retreating torrent, fled also. The three sons of the king, JONATHAN, Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, were slain.

* Deut. xviii. 10, 11.



[Body of Archers.]

Saul himself was grievously wounded by the archers; and that he might not fall alive into the hands of the Philistines and be subjected to their insults, he desired his armour-bearer to strike him through with his sword; and when that faithful follower refused, he fell upon his own sword: and the example was followed by the armour-bearer, when he beheld his lord lying dead before him. "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together."

The next day, when the Philistines came to collect the spoils of the slain, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. The indignity with which they treated the remains of these brave men has no previous example. They cut off their heads, and hung their bodies to the wall of the town of Bethshan, near the Jordan. Their heads and armour they sent into Philistia, as trophies of their triumph, by the hand of the messengers who were despatched to publish it in their temples and their towns. The bodies of Saul and his sons were soon stolen away by night from the wall of Bethshan, by some valiant men of Jabesh, on the opposite side of the river, where a grateful remembrance was cherished of the king's first military exploit, whereby the people of that town were delivered from the loss of their liberty and their eyes. To preclude any attempt at the recovery and continued insult of the bodies, the people burnt them, and buried the collected bones and ashes under a tamarisk-tree.

CHAPTER II.

DAVID.

On the third day of David's return to Ziklag a man arrived in haste, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head, and laid at the feet of David the crown and armlet which Saul had worn. He told, truly, that Israel had fled before the Philistines, and that Saul and his sons were slain; but thinking to win royal rewards from the son of Jesse, he boasted that he had slain Saul with his own hand. The truth was probably that he had found the body of Saul in the night after the battle, and had taken from it the royal insignia which he brought to David. His expectations were grievously disappointed; for David, believing his statement, caused him to be put to death, as one who had not feared to slay the Lord's anointed. The man was an Amalekite. David mourned and fasted for the desolation of Israel, and he lamented the death of his beloved Jonathan, and even of Saul, in a most affecting and beautiful elegy, which we may here introduce as a specimen of the poetical compositions of one whose rank

among the poets of the Hebrews is fully equal to that which he occupies among their kings*:—

"O, antelope of Israel! pierced on thy high place!
How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath;
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa, on you be no dew,
Nor rain, nor fields of first-fruits;
Since there hath been vilely cast away,
The shield of the mighty, the shield of Saul,
The armour of him anointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan was not held back,
Nor did the sword of Saul return in vain.
Saul and Jonathan!
In mutual love were they in life united,
And in their death they were not separated.
Swifter than eagles, stronger than lions were they;
Ye daughters of Israel weep over Saul,
Who clothed you pleasantly in scarlet,
And put golden ornaments upon your robes.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle!
O Jonathan, slain on thy own mountains!
I am grieved for thee, O Jonathan, my brother!
Very dear to me wast thou:
Wonderful was thy love to me,
Surpassing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen!
And the weapons of war perished!"

That he mourned even for Saul, will only be attributed to hypocrisy by those who are themselves incapable of such magnanimity, and are determined to forget that David, during the life of his persecutor, always respected him as a king appointed by God, and twice spared him when he had his life completely in his power.

With the approbation of the Lord, whom he consulted, David now removed, with his family and friends, to Hebron, where the rulers of the tribe of Judah, with views altogether theocratical, awarded the sceptre to him, as one whom God had already designated as king. David was at this time thirty years of age.

But no other tribe concurred with Judah in this important step. On the contrary, all the other tribes elected Saul's only surviving son, Eshbaal, as he was originally named†, but nicknamed Ishbosheth (*a man of shame*), from his weakness and incapacity, which, it would appear, saved his life, by precluding him from being present at the battle in which his brothers perished. This measure was probably promoted by that radical jealousy between the tribes of Judah and Ephraim, which prevented the latter (which took the lead among the other tribes) from concurring in the appointing a king of the rival tribe, or indeed from heartily sympathising in any measure which that tribe originated. But the prime agent in this schism was Abner, the commander of the army, who had drawn off the remnant of the defeated army to the other side the Jordan, and there, at Mahanaim, proclaimed Ishbosheth king. Abner was a bold and able, but unprincipled man; and doubtless expected to govern in the name of his feeble nephew. And he did so.

For two years no hostile acts between the two kingdoms took place. But war was at length provoked by Abner, who crossed the Jordan with the intention to subdue the tribe of Judah to the authority of Ishbosheth. David sent Joab to meet him; and the opposing forces met near the pool of Gibeon. But the men on each side felt that they were all Israelites, and were reluctant to fight against each other. The two generals, therefore, thought of a device which has often been employed in the East, and elsewhere, to excite tribes or nations to battle, when relationship or other causes made them reluctant or wanting in zeal. Twelve men on each side were matched to fight against each other between the two armies; and so well were they matched that they no sooner came within reach of one another, than each man seized his antagonist by the head and sheathed his sword in his body, so

* The version now given is that of Boothroyd, altered in some of the lines.

† 1 Chron. xiii. 33, ix. 39.

that they were all killed upon the spot. This kindled the opposing forces, and a desperate and most sanguinary battle followed. It ended in the defeat of Abner, who was himself obliged to flee for his life. As he fled he was singled out by Joab's brother Asahel, "who was as light of foot as a wild roe;" and he pursued him, without allowing himself to be drawn aside by other objects. He was close at the heels of Abner, when the latter looked back, and finding who it was, he became most anxious to avoid such a blood-feud as would arise between him and Joab, in case he slew his brother, even in his own defence. He therefore entreated Asahel to turn back that he might not be compelled to smite him to the ground. But finding that he was still pursued, and that it was impossible to outstrip his pursuer, he struck at him with the hinder point of his spear*, and with such force, that the weapon passed through him and came out behind. The pursuit of Abner and the other fugitives was continued by Joab and his other brother Abishai until sunset, by which time they were got as far as the hill of Ammah. Here the Benjamites (always valiant, and jealously attached to the house of Saul) rallied again under Abner, and posting themselves on the rising of the hill, stood prepared to make a stout defence; but their general, who was weary of fighting, called to Joab, and begged him to put a stop to the slaughter of his brethren, whose destruction could not but cause bitterness in the end. Although Joab had determined to continue the pursuit all night, he had the sense to hearken to his advice, and caused the trumpet to sound a retreat. After this, Abner and his men took the way to Mahanaim, and Joab returned to Hebron. Abner lost three hundred and sixty men in this action, while on David's side only nineteen were killed. The war having thus commenced, was continued for several years; but it appears to have been a small, irritating warfare, which never came to any important or decisive engagement between the opposing parties. It was, however, attended with this result, that the cause of David was gathering strength every day, while the house of Saul daily became weaker and weaker. Indeed it seems to have required all the great talents of Abner to keep the kingdom of Ishbosheth together.

Meanwhile David reigned prosperously in Hebron. He increased the number of his wives to six, by all of whom sons were born to him in that place†. In this small kingdom his good and prosperous government, together with the knowledge that he had been divinely appointed to reign over all Israel, appears insensibly to have inclined the other tribes towards him, by which, more even than by war, his cause gathered that strength which that of Ishbosheth lost. Abner was fully sensible that without himself the kingdom of his nephew would fall to pieces, or rather pass quietly into the hands of David. He rated his services at their full value; and although we do not ourselves see cause to suspect, as some have done, that he contemplated taking the crown to himself, it is certain that he was not disposed to consider himself responsible to the king for his conduct, or to allow any of his proceedings to be questioned by him. Now Ishbosheth had heard that Abner carried on a criminal intercourse with one of Saul's concubines, named Rizpah: and as, according to the usages of the East, the concubines of a deceased sovereign became the property of the successor in so strong and peculiar a sense, that such an act as that imputed to Abner might be interpreted into a design upon the crown‡, or at least was an insulting encroachment upon the peculiar rights of

* The spear is armed at the lower end with a pointed iron, whereby it is stuck into the ground when the owner is in repose.

† For the purposes of the sequel it may be useful to note the names of these wives, and of the sons which they bore to David. 1. Ahinoam, of Jezreel, bore Amnon. 2. Abigail, the widow of Nabal, bore Chileab, otherwise Daniel. 3. Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, bore Absalom and a daughter named Tamar. 4. Haggith bore Adonijah. 5. Abital bore Shephatiah. 6. Eglah bore Ithream. But as this enumeration is only for genealogical uses, it appears likely that the first-born son only of these several wives is named. It is improbable that they all had one son and none more. Some probably had daughters also; but Tamar only is named, as her history ultimately became of historical importance.

‡ See instances of this in the case of Absalom (2 Sam. xx. 23), and Adonijah (1 Kings ii. 13—25).

royalty, even the timid Ishbosheth was roused to question Abner on the subject. It is not very clear whether the charge was true or false; but it is clear that this overbearing personage was astonished and disgusted that the king should dare to question any part of his conduct. He rose into a towering passion:—"Am I a dog's head, which, against Judah, do show kindness this day unto the house of Saul, thy father, to his brethren and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as Jehovah hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba." From this it seems that even Abner knew that he had acted against a higher duty, in setting up Ishbosheth in opposition to David; but this cannot justify the grounds on which he *now* declared his intention to act against him. What he had said was no vain threat, although he was probably willing afterwards that the son of Saul should take it for an unmeaning outbreak of passion. He sent messengers to David to enter into a treaty with him, under which he would engage to use his great influence in bringing all Israel to acknowledge him as king; and after this he found a pretence for going himself unsuspectedly to Hebron to complete the agreement and arrange the steps to be taken. David had sent to Ishbosheth to desire him to restore to him his wife Michal, whom Saul had given to another. He had a perfect right to make this demand, if so inclined,—the rather as she had thus been disposed of against her own wish; but we may suppose that he was particularly induced to reclaim her at this juncture, in consideration of the satisfaction the measure was likely to give to those attached to the family of Saul. As this claim was doubtless supported by Abner, it was granted; and having obtained an order to demand her from her present husband, that personage himself undertook to escort her to David. From this transaction it would seem that the war had latterly been allowed to die away, although without any concession or treaty having been made on either side. That he was escorting the daughter of Saul to David, proved to Abner a favourable opportunity, on his way, of explaining his present sentiments to the elders of the tribes through which he passed; especially to those of Benjamin, which was naturally the most attached to the house of Saul, while his own influence in it was the greatest. He dwelt strongly on the public benefits which might be expected from the government of one who had been expressly nominated by Jehovah to the kingdom; and such a representation, coming from such a quarter, coupled with the favourable dispositions towards David which had grown up during his reign in Hebron, was attended with such effect, that Abner was authorised to make overtures to him in behalf of the tribes which had hitherto adhered to the house of Saul.

Abner was received with great distinction and royally feasted by David; and after the business on which he really came had been settled to his satisfaction, he departed with the intention of inducing the tribes to concur in giving David a public invitation to take the crown of Israel.

Joab had been absent from Hebron during this visit of Abner; but he returned immediately after Abner had departed, and was deeply displeased when he learned what had occurred. Through the energy of his character, his abilities and experience in the affairs of peace and war, his influence and popularity with the army, which was under his command, and his unquestioned devotion to the interests of David, this man had great authority with the king. His standing, indeed, in the kingdom of Judah, had much resemblance to that of Abner in the other kingdom; nor were their characters altogether unlike. In the points of difference the advantage was on the side of Abner; for his experience in military and public affairs was larger, from which, together with his near relationship to Saul and his son and the high stations he had occupied under them, his influence with the people was far greater than that which Joab or any other

man in Israel could pretend to; and hence his greater power at this time of rendering essential services to the king of Judah. Abner and Joab also served very different masters; and thus it happened that while Abner was, in the public eye, the greatest man in the kingdom of Israel, Joab was in that of Judah only the greatest man next to David. Upon the whole, Abner was the only man in the country of whom Joab had cause to be afraid, and by whom it was likely that his own influence would be superseded in case the two kingdoms were united through his instrumentality. It was probably more from such considerations than any other that his displeasure at the intercourse between David and Abner arose. He went instantly to the king, and reproached him for allowing himself to be imposed upon by the able uncle of Ishbosheth, declaring his belief that the true object of his visit was to obtain such information concerning his state and resources as he might afterwards employ against him. He then went out and sent a messenger after Abner to call him back in the name of the king. As he returned, Joab took care to meet him near the gate, and drew him aside as if to speak to him privately, and while he was entirely unguarded and unsuspicious, gave him a treacherous stab, of which he instantly died. The history describes this as an act of blood-revenge for the death of his brother Asahel by the hand of Abner; and while allowing him the full benefit of this motive, it is hard to believe that envy and jealousy sharpened not the dagger of the avenger. It must be conceded, nevertheless, that the existence of a blood-feud between them extenuated if it did not justify the act of Joab in the eyes of all Israel. It was, in fact, according to the strict ideas of that barbarous institution, the imperative duty of Joab to shed the blood of Abner who had slain his brother; and that Abner himself knew that the death of Asahel would be attended with this result, is evinced by his anxiety to avoid the fatal necessity of slaying his pursuer; for if the man-slayer is known, the avenger is not bound to make any distinction as to the circumstances under which his relative is slain: and at the present day, the one who slays another in battle is pursued by the avenger equally with the murderer. The extent to which the law of Moses had interfered with this custom only provided for the safety of the man-slayer while in a city of refuge. Hebron was a city of refuge; and if Joab had slain Abner *within* that city, the law would have allowed David to treat him as a murderer. This Joab knew; and hence his meeting Abner at the gate, and drawing him aside before he entered the city. These details we judge necessary, to show that those who most suffered from the death of Abner, and abhorred the manner in which it was inflicted, knew that his offence was not punishable by the king or by the law; and hence that it was *not merely* the rank and influence of Joab which prevented David from calling him to account for this barbarous deed. Perhaps *he could not* have punished Joab in any case; but it is important to know that in the present case, the law, custom, and public opinion did not require or permit him to do so.

The resentment of David was nevertheless very great. Like other eastern sovereigns, he must have been impressed with the evils of this custom of blood-revenge, and the extent to which it interfered with good government; nor was he insensible to the insult offered to himself, in the present and other instances by "the sons of Zeruiah," Joab and Abishai, and the high hand with which they wrought their own will. "I am this day weak," he said, "though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me: Jehovah shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." As it was of the highest importance to him that he should be clear of any suspicion of having had any part in the death of Abner, he publicly, "before Jehovah," declared himself guiltless of the blood which had been shed, and invoked the full burden of that blood on Joab and on his house. He ordered a public act of solemn mourning, in which he himself took a prominent part; and at the funeral he followed the body, as chief mourner, to the grave, where he stood weeping, and where he

lamented, in elegiac verse, over the prince and great man, who had that day fallen in Israel.

This conduct of David tended still further to satisfy and conciliate the tribes attached to the house of Saul; and by them the murder of Abner was never imputed to him. Indeed, the event must, at the time, have seemed to himself and others anything but advantageous for his cause. But we, who have his whole history before us, can see that the manner in which he ultimately became king over all Israel, by the free and unsolicited choice of the tribes, was more honourable and safe to him, and more becoming his divine appointment than the same result brought about through the exertions of Abner, whose conduct, as between David and Ishbosheth, must have seemed very equivocal, and could, at the best, have been but "traitorously honest."*

When Ishbosheth heard of Abner's death, (without being aware of the plot in which he was engaged,) he felt that the right arm of his kingdom's strength was broken. Others felt this also: and the conviction that the son of Saul could not govern the troubled kingdom without Abner, grew stronger every day among the tribes, and directed their eyes to David as the only person under whom they could expect to realise the benefits the nation had expected to enjoy under a regal government. This feeling, this tendency of the nation towards David, was perceived, even in the court of Ishbosheth; and two of his officers, brothers, determined to anticipate the course which events were taking, by the assassination of their master, expecting by this act to deserve high rewards and honours from the king of Judah. Accordingly, they stole into his chamber, while, according to the universal custom of the East, he slept there during the mid-day heat. They pierced him as he slept, and then took off his head, with which they escaped unperceived, as at that time of the day most of the people were asleep. The murderers sped to Hebron, and laid the head of Saul's son at the feet of David, with the words, "Behold the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, thine enemy, which sought thy life. Jehovah hath avenged my lord, the king, this day, of Saul and of his seed." Astounding to them was the answer,—"As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity! When one told me saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings;—how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house, upon his bed, shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?" And with these words he commanded his attendants to remove them to an ignominious death. The head of Ishbosheth he ordered to be deposited in the sepulchre of Abner.

The kingdom of Israel was now without even the appearance of a head, nor was there any remaining member of the family of Saul whom the most zealous adherents of that fallen house could dream of supporting in opposition to David. Saul had indeed left some sons by concubines, but they were living in obscurity, and even their existence was scarcely known to the people. Jonathan also had left one son, but he was a mere boy and lame. He was five years old when Saul and his sons perished in the battle of Gilboa, and he became lame from a fall which he received when his nurse fled with him, as soon as the tidings of that overthrow was brought to the house of Saul and Jonathan. His name was Mephibosheth.

David had reigned seven years and a half in Hebron, when, after the deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth, the crown of all Israel seemed to devolve upon him, as naturally as by an act of succession. It was probably the result of an unanimous decision in a great council of the eleven tribes, that those tribes sent an embassy to David in Hebron to invite him to assume the general government of the nation. This they did on the grounds of, 1, his military claim, as one who had often led them to victory in the days of Saul; and, 2, of his theocratical claim, as one who had been expressly nominated by God to gover Israel. By this we see that

* Bishop Hall.

the people were on this occasion careful to recognise the theocracy, since they rested their preference of him on his having been nominated to the kingdom by Jehovah, and having proved himself worthy of it during the reign of Saul. The studious avoidance of all notice of the seven years in which the tribes had been separately ruled seems to intimate a desire that this measure should be formally regarded as following the death of Saul. David intimated his readiness to receive the honour designed for him, and to accede to the conditions on which the crown was held. The rulers of the eleven tribes, therefore, at the head of large bodies of the best-trained men in the several tribes, described as "men that could keep rank," who were chosen to represent the whole of their several tribes in the great national act of inauguration, repaired to Hebron to make David king. The number amounted to not less than 340,000, and the enumeration in the Book of Chronicles* is accompanied with several remarks, which the scantiness of our information concerning the *distinctive* character of the tribes makes interesting. It appears that many members of the tribe of Judah had adhered to the house of Saul, and abode within its dominions; for, on the present occasion, 6800 men of that tribe, armed with shield and spear, came with the others to submit to David. There were 7100 Simeonites of valour. The Levites sent 4600; and there were 3700 priests, headed by Jehoiada, the son of Benaiah; besides whom came Zadok at the head of twenty-two chiefs of his father's house. This Zadok, of the old pontifical line of Eleazar, is the same who was long after made sole high-priest by Solomon to the final exclusion of the house of Eli; but, on the present occasion, he is particularly noticed as "a young man, mighty of valour," which shows —as indeed appears in the history—that the pursuits of the Levites, and even of the Aaronites, were not exclusively of an ecclesiastical and civil nature. From Benjamin came 3000 men; but the greater part of this tribe held back, still cherishing a lingering and futile attachment to the house of Saul, the rule of which had given to the tribe a flattering pre-eminence, which it was unwilling to relinquish. The half tribe of Manasseh on this side the Jordan sent 18,000 men; and the proud tribe of Ephraim testified its concurrence by sending 28,000. From Issachar came only 200 men; but these were the chief persons in the tribe, the whole of which was at their beck, and would have been in attendance if required. To them is given the marked character of being men of political prudence and sagacity, who knew better than most men how Israel ought to act under the present and other circumstances, and whose support was therefore of great value to David. From Zebulon came not fewer than 50,000 men, skilled in the use of all warlike weapons, and "not of double-heart," with respect to the object for which they came. Naphtali furnished 1000 captains, and with them 37,000 men, armed with shield and spear. Dan supplied 28,600 able warriors, and Asher 40,000. The tribes beyond Jordan, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, sent, collectively, 120,000 warlike men. One obvious remark, arising from the survey of these numbers, is the comparative largeness of the proportions furnished by the *remoter* tribes, to the north and beyond Jordan. This is, perhaps, explained by the absence in those tribes of any pretensions for themselves, and of any strong attachment for the house of Saul, which could interfere with the heartiness of their recognition of the claims of David; together with the operation of the principles which gives to a prophet and great man the least degree of honour in and near his own home.

With this vast body, the flower of the Hebrew nation, and representing the whole of it, "David made a league in Hebron before the Lord," which can be construed to have no other meaning than that which has already been indicated in the case of Saul, that he bound himself by oath to observe the conditions on which he received the sceptre, which are now unknown. He was then anointed king, and received the homage of his new subjects; and the whole was terminated by a feast to all the multitude assembled at Hebron, supplies for

* 1 Chron. xii. 23, *ad fin.*

which were liberally sent in by all the neighbouring tribes, "on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen," and consisted of meat, meal, figs, raisins, wine, oil, oxen, and sheep, in great abundance. "For there was joy in Israel."

The first act of David's reign was to undertake the reduction of the fortress of Jebus, on Mount Zion, which had remained in the hands of the natives ever since the days of Joshua, and which, as Josephus reports*, had been, from its situation and its fortifications, hitherto deemed impregnable. The Jebusites, therefore, ridiculed the attempt, and appear to have placed the lame and the blind on the walls, in derision, as fully sufficient to keep him out. But from the lower city, which was already in the possession of the Israelites, there was "a gutter," or subterraneous communication, with the fortress, by which David introduced a party of men and took "the stronghold of Zion." In the operations of this siege, such ability and conduct was displayed by Joab, that he was appointed to the same chief command of the armies of Israel, which he had previously held in the separate kingdom of Judah. The fact that David's rule was likely, under all circumstances, to find the most zealous supporters in his own tribe of Judah, probably disinclined him to remove from its borders; and he determined to make his new conquest the metropolis of his empire. A more centrical situation, with respect to all the tribes, would have placed him in the hands of the Ephraimites, whose cordiality towards a Judahite king might well be suspected, and in whom little confidence could be placed in times of danger and difficulty. Similar considerations have dictated the choice of a very inconveniently situated capital to the reigning dynasty of Persia. But although better sites for a metropolitan city might have been found in the largest extent of Palestine, there were not better within the limits to which, for the reasons indicated, the choice of David was confined. That the site is overlooked from the Mount of Olives, although a great disadvantage in the eyes of modern military engineers, was of little consequence under the ancient systems of warfare, and could not countervail the peculiar advantages which it offered in being inclosed on three sides by a natural fosse (ravines and deep valleys, and terminating in an eminence, which, while strong in its defences from *without*, commanded the town *within*, and was capable of being strongly fortified. The united influence of all these considerations appear to have determined the preference of David for a site which was open to the serious objection, among others, of being so remote from the northern tribes as to render the legal obligation of resort to it three times every year, a more burdensome matter to them than it need have been had a more centrical situation been chosen.

It is supposed that David first gave the name of Jerusalem (*the possession of peace*) to the city, but this is not quite certain. On Mount Zion he fixed his residence, and erected a palace and other buildings, and it was on this account called "the city of David." This strong part of the whole metropolis ever after remained what may be called the royal quarter of the town.

The Philistines had good reason to dread the consequences of the consolidation of all the power of the Hebrew tribes in hands of such tried vigour as those of David, and they deemed it prudent to set upon him before he had time to establish himself firmly in his kingdom. Their measures were so well planned, and so secretly executed, that they appeared suddenly, in great force, in the heart of Judæa, and took the king's native town of Bethlehem, before he was able to make any resistance. Indeed the danger of his position was so urgent, that he was obliged to withdraw, for present safety, with some attached followers, to his old retreat in the cave of Adullam. It was here that he happened to express a longing desire for a drink of water from that well of his native town, at which the thirst of his younger days had often been assuaged. Hearing this, three of his most valiant and devoted men, Joab, Jashobeam, and Eleazar, secretly departed, and breaking through the host of the Philistines, which was encamped

* Antiq. v. 2. Josh. xv. 63.

along the valley of Rephaim, brought him the precious fluid for which they had perilled their lives. But when the king received it, he would not drink, but poured it out as a libation to Jehovah.

Soon after this, David, encouraged by a favourable answer from God, fell upon the Philistines, and so effectually discomfited them in two different onsets, that they were never after able to make head against him or any of his successors. Thus was one of the most irritating thorns in the side of Israel most effectually removed.

And now, when David had a respite from war, about the tenth year of his reign*, he thought of the ark of God, which had so long remained in the house of Abinadab, at Kirjath-jearim, and contemplated its removal to Jerusalem, that the place which had now become the capital of the human kingdom, might also become the capital of the invisible King. The design being received with approbation by the elders and chiefs of Israel whom he consulted, the king prepared for its execution, by despatching messengers throughout all Israel, to summon all the priests and Levites, and to invite as many of the people as were so disposed, to attend the solemnity. He also prepared a tabernacle† to receive the ark on its arrival. Accordingly, at the appointed time, the ark was removed from the house of Abinadab, upon a new cart, attended by David and his court, by a large body of priests and Levites, who sang and played on various instruments of music, and by a numerous concourse of people from all parts of the kingdom. The irregularity of removing it on a cart gave occasion to an accident, attended with such fatal consequences as threw an effectual damp upon the joy of the solemnity: for the cart being at one place much shaken by the oxen, the officious Uzzah, the son or grandson of Abinadab, was struck dead upon the spot for putting forth his hand to stay the ark, none but the priests being warranted to touch it under pain of death‡. This event struck David and the people with such consternation, that the intention of taking the ark to Jerusalem was relinquished, and it was left in the house of a Levite named Obed-edom, near which the circumstance occurred. But about three months after, hearing that the blessing of Jehovah had very evidently rested on the house in which the ark lay, the king hastened to complete his design. He perceived the former improprieties, and directed that the priests should now bear the ark upon their shoulders; and the whole solemnity was placed under the direction of Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, who was found to be best acquainted with the proper observances. This was a great day in Israel. Nothing was omitted by which the occasion could be honoured. In the presence of that sacred symbol of the Divine King, David laid aside his royal mantle, and appeared in such a garb as the Levites wore, with and before whom he went, as one of them; and as they sang and played the triumphant song, which he had composed for the occasion, he accompanied them with his renowned harp, and danced to the joyful sounds it gave forth. Michal, the daughter of Saul, beheld this from a window, when the procession was approaching its destination; and she, imbued with some of the royal notions which had been fatal to her father and his house, despised him in heart for acting so far beneath what she conceived to be the dignity of the king of Israel. And when he came home, she could not refrain from allowing vent to this feeling: the reply of David was spirited and proper, declaring that it was before Jehovah, the true King of Israel, that he had laid aside the king, and made himself one with the people. And if this were to be vile, as she deemed, "I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight."

David now instituted a regular and orderly attendance upon the ark and its tabernacle. But the regular services of religion

* Counting from his first becoming king over Judah only.

† The old tabernacle, made in the wilderness, with the altar, and all the sacred utensils were, as it appears, at Gibeon; why David erected a new tabernacle, instead of removing the former, does not clearly appear; but it is probable that it was too large for the place within his new palace which, for the present, he intended it to occupy.

‡ Num. iv. 15.

were still performed at Gibeon, where the old tabernacle and altar remained, and which was still therefore the place of concourse to the nation at their great festivals. Here the priests rendered their services, under Zadok. The solemn removal of the ark, and its dignified repose in the city of David, were well calculated to make an impression upon the multitudes who were present on that occasion, and awaken their slumbering zeal for Jehovah. These favourable and becoming dispositions the king wished to confirm and strengthen; and for that end made suitable regulations in the services of the priests and Levites, and this especially by animating and instructive Psalms, which were composed, partly by himself, and partly by other gifted persons. They were sung not only by the Levites at all the sacrifices, but also by the people while on their way to the national altar, to attend the feasts. A very precious collection of these compositions has been preserved to our own day in the Book of Psalms, which has in all subsequent ages ministered much edification and comfort to a large portion of mankind. By such instructive means David, without coercive measures, brought the whole nation to forget their idols, and to worship Jehovah alone; and thus also their religion became honourable, even in the eyes of foreigners, and acceptable to many of them. The above is the first occasion on which Zadok is mentioned as high-priest. But after this, throughout the reign of David, he and Abiathar are often named separately or together, as *both* bearing that character—a singular innovation, resulting probably from circumstances over which the king had little control. It seems likely that after Saul had slain the priests of Ithamar's line at Nob he restored the pontificate to the line of Eleazar, in the person of Zadok; while David and his people, during his wandering and his reign in Judah, had been accustomed to look to Abiathar, the escaped son of Ahimelech, as the high-priest; and that on his accession to the throne of Israel, he found the people so accustomed to regard Zadok as high-priest, that he thought it proper and prudent to recognise him in that character, without depriving Abiathar of the consideration he had previously enjoyed. If this explanation be correct, Zadok would have had this advantage over Abiathar, that he had actually discharged the regular functions of the high-priesthood at the tabernacle, which the other had never an opportunity of doing. It is probably on this account that wherever the two names occur together, that of Zadok is placed first.

About five years after this, and the fifteenth of David's reign, when the king had finished and inhabited his palace of cedar, "and God had given him rest round about from all his enemies," he meditated a design of building a Temple to Jehovah, in place of the temporary tabernacle which he had provided. This design he mentioned to the prophet Nathan, to whom it seemed so obviously proper that he gave it much commendation and encouragement. But the night following, a message from God to David was delivered to him. This message declared it seemly that the Temple of God should be built by a man of peace; but his life had been spent in warfare, and he had shed much blood. He was therefore directed to leave the accomplishment of his plan to his son and successor, whose reign should be one of peace. Nevertheless, it was well for David that this intention had been formed, for the Lord, to testify his approbation of this and other evidences of his zeal, and of his attachment to the principles of the theocracy, promised to make his name as great as the names of the great ones who are on the earth; and, far beyond this, the Lord promised to build *him* a house, by establishing the succession in his house, and by granting to his posterity an eternal kingdom. The gratitude with which this promise was received by David seems to show he had some conception of its extensive import. He went, and seating himself most reverently on the ground, before the ark, poured forth the strong expression of his gratitude. Now it is evident that under an express promise of this nature, all succeeding kings of the line of David were

[Various modes of sitting.]

virtually chosen and appointed by Jehovah, according to the essential law of the government.

As the Israelites were always victorious in war, while they were faithful to their God and to the principles of the theocracy, so now the arms of David prospered in whatever direction they were turned. Indeed it is scarcely, until his reign, that the national character of the Hebrews can be deemed to have recovered of the wounds which it had received in Egypt; and we find among them little military skill, and as little valour or fortitude. But from this time forward, trained to war and victory by David, they may be recognised as a truly courageous people, possessing among them as much military skill, science, and discipline, as any other nation of the same rank and age could claim.

The neighbouring and rival nations had soon cause to learn that a new king reigned in Israel. The time was come for the old enemies, who had so often inspired the Israelites with dread, to be afraid in their turn; and even the more distant foreign princes, whose assistance they procured, had cause to repent of provoking an enemy more puissant than themselves. It was now the turn of the Philistines to receive the yoke to which they had accustomed Israel. Attacked in their own country, and beaten on all hands, they were brought under tribute and subjection. The Moabites were more heavily dealt with: to secure his conquest, David thought it necessary to act with a severity not usual with him; for he put to death one half of those who were taken with arms in their hands: and although it was then, or had been not long previously, usual for the nations to put all the armed men to death, this deed strikes us as harsh, from comparison with the milder general character of David's own warfare, and can only be explained by reference to some peculiar circumstances with which we are unacquainted.

In the ancient promises to the Hebrews, the limit to which, in their palmy state, their victorious arms should extend, had been as clearly defined as the limit of their own proper territory. And the distinction here incidentally mentioned, between the limit of the *proper country* destined for their own occupation, and that of the *subject territory* which should be acquired, is of considerable importance, and should not be overlooked or confounded as it often has been. The *limit of conquest* was fully reached by David.

Eastward this limit was to extend to the Euphrates. Of the kings who reigned in the intermediate country, one of the most powerful was Hadadezer, king of Zobah. This sovereign, whose dominion extended eastward to the Euphrates, was defeated by David in the first battle, and lost 20,000 infantry, 7000 horsemen, with their horses, and 1000 chariots of war. Of the chariots, the king of Israel preserved a hundred, with horses for them; but mindful that the law of the kingdom forbade the accumulation of horses, all the others were destroyed. The Syrians of Damascus, who were allies (perhaps tributaries) of Hadadezer, and came to his assistance, shared his fate. Hadad, their king, was vanquished, with the loss of 22,000 men, and David brought his territory under subjection to his sceptre. These two victories carried the eastern limit of his conquests to the Euphrates. Josephus adduces the testimony of a native historian, Nicolaus, of Damascus, in confirmation of the testimony which the Hebrew writers have left. From this it seems that the kingdom, of which Damascus was the capital, had grown very powerful under this Hadad, who might, indeed, be considered as its actual founder; but after various engagements with king David, was finally overthrown in a great battle near the Euphrates, in which he performed deeds worthy of his high name. Josephus himself, in conformity with the

Scriptural account, relates that after David had reduced to his obedience Damascus and all Syria, having strong garrisons in every place where they seemed necessary, he returned in triumph to Jerusalem, where he consecrated to God the golden shields which had been borne by the royal guard of Hadadezer, from whose cities he also brought much spoil of brass for the service of the future temple.

While David was engaged in these victories, the southern frontier of his conquests was, according to ancient promises, extended southward to the Red Sea. This was the work of Joab's valiant brother, Abishai, who defeated the Edomites in "the Valley of Salt," at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and then carried his victorious arms into the mountains, the inclosed valleys, and the rocky wildernesses of Mount Seir, leaving garrisons to secure the advantages he had gained.

David was too well acquainted with the law, to attempt to incorporate any of these conquests as integral parts of the Hebrew territory. He appears in most cases to have left the internal government of the conquered states in the hands of the native princes, who were required to render annually a certain amount of tribute, consisting, for the most part, of such articles as their country afforded in the most abundance, or which they had the best means of procuring or producing. The delivery of such tribute from subject states, under the name of presents, was anciently as it is now, an occasion of great pomp and ceremony, which, on another occasion, we shall more particularly notice. The obedience of the more distant conquests was secured by garrisons, which do not seem to have been judged necessary in those nearer countries which the mere vicinity of the conquering power might sufficiently control.

Thus David literally became a "king of kings," and his fame extended into far countries. Some states which had been at hostilities with the states conquered by him sent splendid embassies, with valuable gifts, to congratulate him on his successes. Among these, Toi, the king of Hamah, upon the Orontes, who had been at war with Hadadezer, is particularly mentioned. He sent his own son Joram "to salute" and "bless" king David, and to deliver costly gifts, such as vessels and utensils of gold, silver, and fine brass. All the surplus wealth thus acquired from the states he conquered, or from those which sought his friendship and alliance, was treasured up by him for the great work which he had so much at heart, and which his son was destined to execute.

But of all David's foreign alliances, the earliest and most valuable was that with Hiram, king of Tyre. This had been formed very soon after David had taken Jerusalem and defeated the Philistines, and seems to have been sought by Hiram; for it will be remembered that David was famous in the closely-neighbouring states before he became king; and no doubt not only his eminent public qualities, but his remarkable personal history, was familiar not less to the Phœnicians than to the Philistines. And although an enterprising commercial and skilful manufacturing nation, like them, would be disposed to look down upon a people so inferior to themselves as the Hebrews in the finer and larger arts of social life,—military talents and success, and such heroic qualities as the character of David offered, have never yet failed to be appreciated, wherever found. Hiram "was ever a lover of David," and the offered alliance must have been the more gratifying to him as it came before "his fame went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations." This alliance was one of mutual advantage. Tyre possessed but a narrow strip of maritime territory, the produce of which, if sedulously cultivated, would have been very inadequate to the supply of its teeming population and numerous fleets. But besides this, the absorbing devotion of the Phœnicians to commerce and the arts rendered them averse to the slow pursuits of agriculture, the products of which they could so much more easily obtain by exchange against the products of their foreign traffic and their skill. To them, therefore, it was a most invaluable circumstance, that behind them lay a country in the hands of a people who had

none of the advantages which were so much prized by themselves, but who had abundance of corn, wine, oil, and cattle to barter for them. An alliance cemented by such reciprocal benefits, and undisturbed by territorial designs or jealousies, was likely to be permanent; and we know that it tended much to advance the Hebrews in the arts which belong to civilized life, and to promote the external splendour of this and the ensuing reign. In the present instance Hiram supplied the architects and mechanics, as well as the timber (hewn in Lebanon), whereby David was enabled to build his palace of cedar, and to undertake the other works which united the upper and lower cities, and rendered Jerusalem a strong and comely metropolis.

In the midst of his success and glory, the memory of Jonathan was still very dear to David. He caused inquiry to be made whether any of his family remained, to whom he might show kindness; he then first heard of his lame son Mephibosheth, and caused him to be conducted to Jerusalem. The afflicted young man was received with great kindness by the king; who restored to him the lands which had belonged to Saul, for the support of his household, but desired that he would himself be a constant guest at the royal table, even as one of the king's own sons. This generous treatment, with the continued kindness which he afterwards received, won entirely the open heart of Jonathan's son. He became strongly attached to the person and interests of David, whose higher qualities he regarded with admiration and reverence.

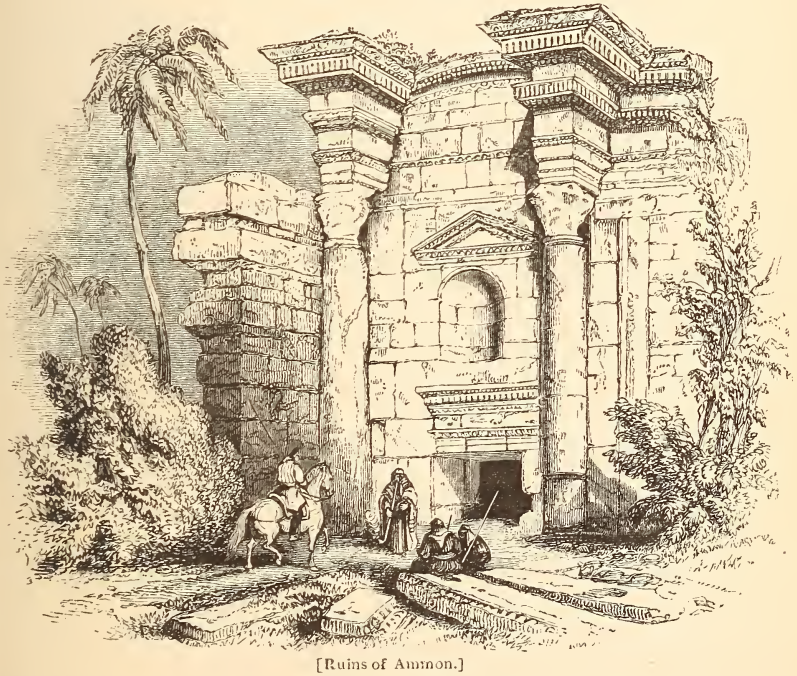
It was probably in the period of peace and glory which followed the victories of David over all the enemies of Israel, that he employed himself in the organization of the government. The very important part which he took in giving to all the departments of the government the form and character which he desired it to bear in future times, has, it seems to us, been rather overlooked and undervalued. For, in truth, David was the real founder of the Hebrew monarchy; and in that character his great abilities appear not less prominently than in the various other endowments by which he was so eminently distinguished from the mass of mankind. But his measures will more suitably engage our attention in the concluding portion of this chapter than in the present place, in which, however, it seemed desirable to point out the period to which his principal operations may with the greatest probability be referred.

During the days of his adversity, when persecuted by Saul, David had been treated by Nahash the king of Ammon with some kindness, of which he cherished a very grateful remembrance. When, therefore, he heard of his death, he sent an embassy to condole with the new king, Hanun, upon the loss of his father, and to congratulate him upon his peaceable succession. But this prince was led by his courtiers to regard the ambassadors as spies, and dared to give them such treatment as was then, and would be at this day in the East, regarded as the most ignominious which any men could receive. He caused their beards to be shaved, and their long garments to be cut short at their buttocks, and in this condition sent them away. When David heard of this grievous insult to him through his ambassadors, he was filled with indignation. He sent messengers to meet these personages, and to relieve them from the necessity of appearing at his court in their present degraded condition, by directing them to remain at Jericho until the renewed growth of their beards might enable them to appear without shame. As the insult was too gross to be allowed to pass unpunished, David ordered Joab to march with an imposing force against the Ammonites. Meanwhile that people had not been idle; but fully aware of the probable effect of their ungenerous conduct, and not confiding in their own strength, they engaged the assistance of some of the neighbouring princes of Syria—in fact, "*hired*" them as mercenaries, being the first example of the kind which history offers. The force thus obtained from four Syrian princes amounted to 33,000 men, who came and encamped before Medeba in the land of Ammon. The force of the Ammonites themselves marched out of the town when the

army of Israel appeared. Joab with his usual address hastened to prevent the junction of the two armies, and himself turned against the Syrians, while his brother Abishai kept the Ammonites in check. The Syrians were speedily put to flight by Joab; and when the Ammonites saw this, they also fled before Abishai, and hastened into the city.

In a second campaign, David himself marched against a powerful army composed not only of the Syrians, but of Assyrians from beyond the Euphrates, whose assistance had been procured by Hadadezer, who seems now to have determined on a last and grand effort to recover and secure his independence. This formidable army was under the command of Shobach, the general of Hadadezer, and were encamped at Helam, near the Euphrates, where David found them. In the terrible battle which ensued the Israelites were victorious; and that day they destroyed 700 chariots, 7000 horse, and 40,000 foot, being about half the force which the Syrians on both sides the river had been able to bring into the field. By this decisive victory the Syrian nations were completely subdued; and the Ammonites were henceforth left to their own resources.

The next campaign against that nation David left to the conduct of Joab, remaining himself at Jerusalem. Joab marched into the land of Ammon, and after ravaging the country, laid siege to the metropolitan city of Rabbah, or Rabbath-Ammon, which for some time held out against him.



[Ruins of Ammon.]

There was little in this war to occasion much anxiety in the king, who remained quiet at Jerusalem, where, in an evil and unguarded hour, his inordinate desires brought him very low, and entailed much anguish and sorrow on his future reign.

One afternoon the king arose from his mid-day sleep, and walked on the terraced roof of his palace *, from the commanding

* There have been many grave remarks and sermons upon the consequences of *idleness*, as exemplified in this instance, and so forth. Now there is no idleness in the

height of which he unhappily caught a view of a woman bathing. This was the beautiful Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was then serving under Joab at the siege of Rabbah. The king sent for her, and she became with child by him. Afflicted at this event, which was so calculated, by betraying the adulterous connection, to bring upon the woman the ignominious death which the law demanded, if the husband should think proper to demand her punishment, David sent to desire Joab to send him to Jerusalem, as if with news of the war, hoping that his presence about this time would screen, or at least render doubtful, the effects of his own crime. But Uriah, either, as he professed, thinking the gratifications of home inconsistent with the obligations of his military service, or suspecting the fidelity of his wife, avoided her during his stay, and remained publicly among the king's attendants. Disappointed in this device by the proud honour or caution of Uriah, the king concluded that the life of Bathsheba and his own character could only be secured by his death. This therefore he contrived, in concert with the unprincipled Joab, in such a manner as to make him perish by the sword of the Ammonites, although this could not be effected without involving several other men in the slaughter. David concluded his complicated crime by sending back to Joab, through the messengers who brought this intelligence, a hypocritical message of condolence:—"Let not this thing displease thee, *for the sword devoureth one as well as another.*" And then, to fill up the measure of his successful guilt, he openly took Bathsheba to wife, after the days of her mourning were expired; and she bore him a son.

But the deed which David had done with so much privacy, thinking to escape human detection, "displeased Jehovah;" and He sent Nathan the Prophet to reprove him. This he did with much tact, in a well known and very beautiful tale of oppression and distress*, so framed that the king did not at the first perceive its application to himself, and which worked so powerfully upon his feelings that his anger was kindled against the man, who "had no pity," and he declared not only that he should, as the law required, make a fourfold restitution; but, with a severity beyond the law of the case, pronounced a sentence of death upon him. Instantly the prophet retorted, "*Thou* art the man!" In the name of the Lord, he authoritatively upbraided him with his ingratitude and transgression, and threatened him that *the sword* which he had privily employed to cut off Uriah should never depart from his own house, and that his own wives should be publicly dishonoured by his neighbour.

Convicted and confounded, David instantly confessed his guilt—"I have sinned against JEHOVAH!"—and for this speedy humiliation, without attempting to dissemble or cloak his guilt, the Lord was pleased to remit the sentence of death which he had pronounced on himself, and to transfer it to the fruit of his crime. The child died; and the Rabbins remark that three more of David's sons were cut off by violent deaths, thus completing as it were the fourfold retaliation for the murder of Uriah which he had himself denounced.

"The fall of David is one of the most instructive and alarming recorded in that most faithful and impartial of all histories, the Holy Bible. And the transgression of one idle and unguarded moment pierced him through with many sorrows and embittered the remainder of his life, and gave occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme on account of this crying offence of 'the man after God's own heart.' When he only cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, *his heart smote him* for the indignity thus offered to his master; but when he treacherously cut off a faithful and gallant soldier, who was fighting his battles, after having defiled his bed,

case, or anything to blame David for, but the sin into which he fell. In warm climates the cool morning hours are highly favourable to exertion, and therefore the orientals rise early to employ them; to compensate for which, and to obtain the total quantity of sleep which nature requires, they lie down again during the heat of the day, when, if they were awake, the relaxing warmth would make exertion difficult. Taken in all, the orientals do not sleep more, if as much, as we do; but they find it convenient and suitable to have two short sleeps instead of a single long one; and for this they do not deserve to be considered indolent.

* See the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 1—4.

his heart smote him not, at least we read not of any compunction or remorse of conscience till Nathan was sent to reprove him. Then, indeed, his sorrow was extreme; and his Psalms, composed on this occasion, express in the most pathetic strains the anguish of a wounded spirit, and the bitterness of his penitence *. . . . . Still, the rising again of David holds forth no encouragement to sinners who may wish to shelter themselves under his example, or flatter themselves with the hope of obtaining his forgiveness; for though his life was spared, yet God inflicted upon him those temporal punishments which the prophet had denounced. The remainder of his days were as disastrous as the beginning had been prosperous." †

These things happened about the eighteenth year of David's reign, and the forty-eighth of his age.

Soon after this, Joab, always zealous for the honour and credit of his master, though not himself an unambitious man, sent to acquaint David that he had taken the royal quarter of the city of Rabbah; and as this contained the sources from which the rest was supplied with water, it was not possible that it could much longer hold out. He therefore desired that the king would come with a suitable reinforcement and carry the town, that his might be the glory of bringing the war to a conclusion. David did so. The spoil taken in this metropolis was immense; and among it was the crown of the king, of gold set round with jewels, and worth a talent of gold, which may be reckoned at nearly 6000*l.* This was "set on David's head;" but whether as appropriating it to his own future use as king of Israel, or as the act of a conqueror to denote the transference to himself of that sovereignty over Ammon which the native princes had hitherto enjoyed, is not quite evident. It is certain that such of this cruel and arrogant people as were taken in Rabbah, were treated with unusual severity—not, indeed, by their being put to torturing deaths, as the ambiguous terms of the text have suggested, but by their being reduced to personal servitude, and devoted to the most laborious employments which existed among the Hebrews, being such as those of sawing and cleaving wood, of harrowing the ground, and of labouring in the brick-fields.

This was prosperity; as was, not long after, the birth of another son from Bath-sheba. This son was SOLOMON, who, long before his birth, and long before his mother was known to David, had been pointed out, by name, as "the man of peace," who was to succeed him in the throne, and through whom his dynasty was to reign in Israel.

But the commencement of the evils threatened upon the house of David was not long withheld. Amnon, the eldest of his sons, conceived a violent passion for his half-sister, Tamar, the full sister of Absalom. By a feigned sickness he procured her presence in his house, and delayed not to declare to her his criminal desires; and finding that he could not persuade her to compliance, he by force effected her dishonour. Then passing suddenly from a criminal excess of love to an equal excess of hate, he expelled her ignominiously from his house. Tamar, in her grief, rent her virginal robe and threw dust upon her head, and sought the asylum of her brother Absalom's house; for, according to the ideas of the East, *the son of the same mother* is, more than even the father, the proper person to protect a female and to redress her wrongs. No man could be more haughty and implacable than Absalom; but he was also deeply politic; and while he received the unhappy Tamar with tenderness, he desired her to conceal her grief, seeing that a brother was the cause of it, and to spend her remaining days in retirement in his house. He made no complaint on the subject, and, young as he was, so well concealed his deep resentment, that even Amnon had not the least suspicion of it. When the news of this villainous fact came to the ears of David, it troubled him greatly; but being greatly attached to Amnon, as being his eldest son and probable successor in the throne, he neglected to call him to account or to punish him for his transgression. This, we may be sure, increased the resentment of Absalom, and perhaps laid the foundation of

* See Ps. xxxii., li., ciii. † Hales, ii. 341—343.

his subsequent alienation from, and dislike to, his father.

Absalom waited two years before he found an opportunity of giving effect to his long and deeply-cherished purposes of vengeance. It seems that David allowed separate establishments to his sons very early. We find before, that both Amnon and Absalom had separate houses, and now we learn that Absalom (and doubtless his brothers) had a distinct property to support his expenses. For at this time he was about to hold a grand sheep-shearing feast in Baalhazor, to which he invited the king and all his sons. As Absalom had hoped, David declined, on the ground of the expense which his presence would occasion to his son; but all the princes went, and among them and the chief of them was the eldest, Amnon. Now Absalom felt that the day of his vengeance was come; and while he received his company with distinction, and royally entertained them, he gave secret orders to his servants to fall upon Amnon, and slay him, even at the table, on a given signal from himself. This was done. Amnon was slain while his heart was warmed with wine; on which the other princes, expecting perhaps the same fate, made all haste to get to their mules, and fled to Jerusalem. Their arrival relieved the king from the horror into which he had been plunged by a rumour that *all* his sons had been slain; but still his indignation and grief were very great. Absalom himself fled the country, and found refuge with his maternal grandfather, Talmai, the king of Geshur, with whom he remained for three years.

During this time the grief of David for the murder of Amnon was gradually assuaged, and his heart insensibly turned with kindness towards Absalom, to whom he always had been much attached, and who was now his eldest son, and who might seem to have the more claim on his indulgence and sympathy on account of his exclusion from the succession to the throne, to which by birth he deemed himself entitled. Joab was not slow to perceive the turn which the king's feelings were taking, and was desirous of bringing about a reconciliation between David and Absalom; but not daring to speak openly to the king himself, in the first instance, he engaged a shrewd woman of Tekoah to come before the king with a fictitious tale of distress, which, as in the case of Nathan's story, might be made instructively applicable to the circumstances. The woman played her part to admiration; but when she began to make her application, the king at once guessed that she had been prompted by Joab; and this being admitted by the woman, the king turned to that personage, who was present all the time, and, glad that what was secretly his own desire was thus made to appear a concession to the urgent request of that powerful servant, he said, "Behold, now, I have done this thing; go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom again." He accordingly came back to Jerusalem; but his father declined to see him on his return; and he remained two years in Jerusalem without appearing before the king.

At the end of that time Absalom was again, through the interference of Joab, admitted to the presence of his father, who embraced him and was reconciled to him.

It would seem that during his retirement, Absalom had formed those designs, for the ultimate execution of which he soon after began to prepare the way: this was no less than to deprive his father of his crown. As David was already old, Absalom would probably have been content to await his death, but for peculiar circumstances. If David properly discharged his duty, he must have led his sons to understand that although the succession to the throne had been assured to his family, the ordinary rules of succession were not to be considered obligatory or binding, inasmuch as the Supreme King possessed and would exercise the right of appointing the particular person who might be acceptable to him. In the absence of any contrary intimation, the ordinary rules might be observed; but, according to the principles of the theocratical government, no such rules could be of force when a special appointment intervened. It was already known to David and could not but be known or suspected by Absalom, that not only he but some other of the king's sons were to be passed over by

such an appointment, in favour of Solomon, to whom, by this time, the king probably began to pay attention as his successor. The fact that even the ordinary law of primogeniture as applied to the government, had not yet been exemplified among the Hebrews, must have tended to increase Absalom's uncertainty of his own succession to his father. Besides, in contending for the crown while his father lived, he had but one competitor, and that one fondly attached to him; whereas if he waited until his father's death, he might have many vigorous competitors in his brothers. These, or some of them, were probably the considerations in which the designs of Absalom originated. But these designs were not merely culpable as against his own father, but as an act of rebellion against the ordinations of the theocracy, since they involved an attempt to appropriate by force that which God had otherwise destinated, or which at least was to be left for his free appointment. The ultimate success of Absalom would therefore have utterly subverted the theocratical principle which still remained in the constitution of the Hebrew state.

At the first view, such an enterprise, as against such a man as David, and by his own son, must have seemed wild and hopeless. But in the contest between youth and age,—between novelty and habit,—between the dignity and authority of an old king, and the ease and freedom of one who has *only* popularity to seek,—the advantages are not all in favour of the old governor. Besides, it seems that there was much latent discontent among the people, arising in a considerable degree from that very confidence in the justice and wisdom of the king by which his throne ought to have been secured. It is the duty of an oriental king to administer justice in his own person, and that duty is not seldom among the heaviest of those which devolve upon him. This grew in time to be so sensibly felt, that ultimately among the Hebrews, as in some oriental and more European states, the king only undertook to attend to appeals from the ordinary tribunals. But under the former state of things, the people will rather bring their causes before a just and popular king than to the ordinary judges; and he in consequence is so overwhelmed with judicial business, that there remain only two alternatives—either to give up all his time to these matters, to the neglect of the general affairs of the nation; or else to risk his popularity by fixing a certain time every day for the hearing of causes, whereby some of the suitors must often wait many days before their causes can be brought under his notice. This hindrance to bringing a case immediately before the king is calculated to relieve him by inducing the people to resort to the inferior judges from whom prompt justice might be obtained; but on the other hand, it is well calculated to endanger his popularity with the unthinking multitude, who deem their own affairs of the highest importance, and attribute to his neglect or indolence the delay and difficulty which they experience. David made choice of the latter alternative, and suffered the inevitable consequences.

Absalom was not slow to perceive the advantage this was to him, or to neglect the use which might be made of it. He had other advantages: he was an exceedingly fine young man, admired by all Israel for his beauty, and particularly celebrated for the richness and luxuriance of his hair. This was no small matter among a people so open as were the Hebrews to receive impressions from the beauty, or tallness, or strength of their public men. It was also probably a great advantage to Absalom, as against David, and which would have availed him against any of his brothers, had any of them been older than himself, that he was maternally descended from a race of kings.

Soon after the reconciliation with his father, Absalom began to live with great ostentation; taking upon him much more state than his station as the eldest son of the crown required, and more probably than his father exhibited as king. He had chariots, and a guard of horsemen, and never appeared in public but attended by fifty men. This, by contrast, the more enhanced the condescension and affability which his purposes required him to exemplify. It was

his wont to make his appearance very early in the morning, in the way that led to the palace-gate; and when any man who had a law-suit came to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and inquire with much apparent interest from what town he came, and the nature of his suit before the king; he would then condole with him on the state of affairs which made it so difficult to obtain redress and justice, and would wind up with the passionate exclamation, "Oh that *I* were made judge in the land, that every man who hath any suit or cause, might come unto *me*, and *I* would do him justice!" And then when any man passing by, came to make his obeisance to the king's son, Absalom would put forth his arms, and take hold of him, and embrace him like a brother. "And on this manner," says the narrative, "did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: *so Ab alom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*" And it is important to note that the men whose hearts he thus "stole" were inhabitants of all the different parts of the land, who would afterwards carry to their several homes the impressions they had received.

At last, four years after his reconciliation to his father, Absalom judged his plans ripe for execution; he therefore obtained the king's permission to go to Hebron, under the pretence of offering there a sacrifice which he had vowed during his residence at Geshur. At this place he had appointed the chiefs of his party to meet him, while others, who were dispersed through all the tribes, were ordered to proclaim him king, as soon as they heard the signal given by the sound of the trumpet. At his arrival in Hebron, he sent for Ahithophel who readily came; and the defection of that great politician, who had been the chief of David's councillors, and whose reputation for wisdom was so great, that his opinion on most subjects was respected as that of an oracle, gave much strength to the cause of Absalom, and attracted to Hebron numbers of influential men from all quarters of the land.

Alarmed at this formidable rebellion so close to him, David hastily took flight with his family and servants, leaving ten of his concubine-wives in charge of the palace. He paused outside the town to survey the faithful few who were prepared to follow his fortunes. Among them were the high-priests, Zadok and Abiathar, with the priests and Levites bearing the ark. These David directed to return with the ark into the city: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, 'I have no delight in thee;' behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." From this and other expressions, similarly humbled and resigned to the dispensations of providence, it appears that he recognised in this unnatural conspiracy against him a portion of the judgments which the prophet had been authorized to denounce against him for his iniquities in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba. David also pointed out to the high-priests that they might render him much service by remaining in the city, from which they might secretly transmit intelligence and advice to him through their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan.

The whole of the two corps of body-guards (the Cherethites and Pelethites), as well as the 600 Gathites, were ready to attend the king. The last-named body appear to have been native Philistines of Gath, whom David had attached to his service after the conquest of their country, and who had perhaps become proselytes.

The king attempted to dissuade Ittai, their leader, from attending him with his men, apparently feeling that, as foreigners and mercenaries, they might be rather expected to attach themselves to the rising fortunes of Absalom. But the answer of Ittai was decisive: "As Jehovah liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

Having taken this melancholy review of his followers, the king went on, "by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, ...

weeping as they went up," in token of extreme sorrow and humiliation. They had scarcely reached the summit before David was joined by an old and attached friend named Hushai, who had been one of his council, and who came with his clothes rent and dust upon his head, resolved to share in the misfortunes of his king. But David, well convinced of his attachment, did not think it fit to take him with his train; but rather begged him to go and join himself to Absalom, where he might render much better service by thwarting the counsels of Ahithophel (of whose defection he had just heard), and by conveying to him, through the two high-priests, information of whatever resolutions the revolters might take. Hushai readily accepted this office, and acquitted himself in it with such consummate tact and zeal, as not a little contributed to the final overthrow of Absalom and his party.

In his further progress David was joined by Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, who brought with him some necessary refreshments, and falsely and treacherously reported that his master remained behind, in the expectation that the turn which affairs were taking might result in the restoration of the house of Saul in his person. David, sensibly hurt at this treatment from one who owed so much to his kindness and gratitude, hastily told Ziba henceforth to regard as his own property the lands he had hitherto managed for Mephibosheth. Immediately after, an incident occurred to confirm the impression he had thus received; for near Bahurim, a village not far on the eastern side of Olivet, he was encountered by one of Saul's family, named Shimei, who dared to throw at him and his people vollies of stones, accompanied by the grossest abuse and bitterest imprecations against David as the author of all the wrongs and misfortunes of the house of Saul, which he said were now in the course of being avenged. All this unexpected insult David bore with meekness and patience; for when Abishai desired permission to punish the man on the spot, the king refused; "Behold," he said, "my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for Jehovah hath bidden him. It may be that Jehovah will look on mine affliction, and that Jehovah will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Absalom delayed not to march to Jerusalem. He was surprised and gratified to find there Hushai, the old friend of his father, and gave him a place in his council. In that council the voice of Ahithophel was still paramount and decisive. Perceiving that many held back or wavered from the apprehension that Absalom would hardly go to the last extremities against his father, and that possibly they might become the victims of another reconciliation between David and his son, this wily and unprincipled statesman advised that Absalom should not delay to remove this apprehension by such an act as would, in the sight of all the people, commit him beyond all hope of a pardon or reconciliation to the bad cause in which he was engaged. This was that he should rear a pavilion on the top of the palace (to render it conspicuous from afar), into which he should, "in the sight of all Israel," enter to the concubine wives whom David had left in charge of the palace. This atrocious council was followed by Absalom, who thus unintentionally accomplished Nathan's prophecy.

The next advice of Ahithophel was that not a moment should be lost in crowning the success of the rebellion by the death of the king, without allowing him time to bring his resources into action. To this end he offered himself to pursue him at the head of 12,000 men; "And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people who are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only. And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned—(*i.e.* thou seekest only one man's life): and the whole people shall be in peace." This really sagacious advice was much approved by Absalom, who perhaps considered that the guilt would rest upon Ahithophel; and to the other counsellors it also seemed good. Hushai was absent; and as a high opinion of his prudence

was entertained, Absalom sent for him, and then told him what Ahithophel had advised, and asked whether he thought that advice good. Hushai at once saw that David was lost, if this plan were not frustrated. He, therefore, with great presence of mind, adduced several specious arguments against it, and in favour of delay; dwelling upon the known valour of David and his friends, and the serious consequence of any check or failure in the first attack. The least repulse at such a juncture might be fatal to the cause of Absalom. The awe in which they all stood of the military talents and courage of the old king gave such effect to these suggestions, that the counsel of Hushai was preferred to that of Ahithophel. Of all this Hushai apprised the high-priests, and desired them to convey the information to David through their sons, together with his advice that not a moment should be lost in passing to the country beyond Jordan. This message was conveyed to David with some danger and difficulty by Jonathan and Ahimaaz, who had remained in concealment at Ain Rogel, outside the city. Neither the information nor advice were lost upon the king, who instantly marched to the Jordan, and passed over with all his people, so that by the morning light not one was left in the plain of Jericho.

The far-seeing Ahithophel deemed the cause of Absalom to be lost, when he knew that the counsel of Hushai was to be followed. His pride also could little brook the neglect of the advice which he had given, and which he had been used to see so reverently regarded. On both accounts, he abandoned the cause. He went to his own home; and, while he was still wise enough to set his affairs in order, was mad enough to hang himself.

David established himself at the town of Mahanaim, which, it will be remembered, had been the royal seat of Ishbosheth, and which appears to have been chosen by him, and now by David, on account of the strength of its fortifications. To that place several principal persons of the country, who were well affected to the cause of David, brought a timely supply of provisions for himself and his men, together with tents, beds, and other necessary utensils. An aged person of Gilead, named Barzillai, particularly distinguished himself by his liberality on this occasion to the exiled king.

When Absalom heard that his father was at Mahanaim, he crossed the Jordan with an army, and encamped in the land of Gilead. His army was under the command of Amasa, his cousin*.

David, on his part, reviewed his force, which was but a handful of men as compared with the large host which Absalom brought into the field. He divided it into three battalions, the command of which he gave to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gathite, intending himself to command the whole in person. But his people, aware that his valued life was principally sought, would not hear of it, but insisted on his remaining behind at Mahanaim, with a small reserved force. As the rest of his adherents marched out at the gate, David, who stood there, failed not to charge the commanders, in the hearing of the men, for his sake to respect the life of Absalom.

A most sanguinary action was soon after fought in the forest of Ephraim, wherein the rebel army was defeated, with the loss of 20,000 men, slain in the battle-field, besides a great number of others who perished in the wood and in their flight. Absalom himself, mounted upon a mule, was obliged to flee from a party of David's men towards the wood, where the boughs of a thick oak having taken hold of his bushy hair, in which he took so much pride, the mule continuing its speed, left him suspended in the air. The pursuing soldiers, seeing him in this state, respected the order of the king, and forbore to smite him; but Joab, who happened to learn what had occurred, ran and struck three darts through his body. "Whatever were Joab's crimes, among them disloyalty was not to be reckoned. And now he gave the most unequivocal proof of his unshaken fidelity, in knowingly incurring the king's displeasure, to rid him of an obstinate rebel against his own father, whom

* See 1 Chron. ii. 16, 17. But 2 Sam. xvii. 25, makes Abigail, the sister of David, the *grand*mother of Amasa.

no forgivenesses could soften and no favours could bind, for whom Joab himself had so successfully interceded, and was likely therefore to have been otherwise well disposed towards Absalom from the mere circumstance of having served him."*

As the death of Absalom ended the cause of war, Joab caused the trumpet to sound a retreat, to stop the carnage. The body of Absalom was taken down, and cast into a large pit, and covered with a heap of stones. This was not the end or the sepulchre expected by this ambitious man, when he reared for himself a fair monument "in the king's dale," supposed the Valley of Jehoshaphat, to keep his name in remembrance, because he had no sons, and therefore called it by his own name. The partisans of Absalom were no sooner acquainted with the death of their popular chief than they fled, every man to his own home.

Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the high-priest, besought Joab to be allowed to bear the tidings of the victory to the king. But as Joab knew that David would regard as evil any tidings that included the death of his son, he, out of regard to Ahimaaz, refused his permission, but sent Cushi with the news. The other, afterwards persisting in his request, was allowed to go also; and he went with such speed that he outran Cushi, and was the first to appear before the king, who sat at the gate of Mahanaim, anxiously awaiting tidings from the battle. The king and the father had struggled hard within him; the father conquered; and now his absorbing desire was to know that Absalom was safe. Aware of this feeling, Ahimaaz contented himself with reporting the victory, leaving to Cushi the less pleasant news; and he, when plainly asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" answered, with much discretion, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." On hearing this, "the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'" And thus he remained in the chamber over the gate, with his head covered like a mourner, wailing for his son, and oblivious to all things else.

His faithful adherents, who, by venturing their lives for him against fearful odds, had that day restored him to his throne, returning weary to the city, where they deserved to be greeted with thanks and praises, and triumphal songs, were quite confounded to learn this conduct of the king, and slunk into the town like guilty people—even like defeated men rather than conquerors. As very serious consequences might arise from this state of feeling, Joab went in to the king, and reproved him very sharply for his unkingly conduct and untimely wailing, so calculated to discourage his truest friends, and insisted that he should go forth and show himself to the people, and speak kindly to them; For, said he, "if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now." The king could see the prudence of this counsel; and, therefore, curbing his strong emotion, he went down to the gate and sat there; on hearing which the people hastened to present themselves before him, and all was well.

It might seem the obvious consequence of his victory, that David should repass the Jordan at the head of his conquering army, and resume his throne at Jerusalem. But the mass of the people had chosen another for their king, and by that act had virtually, to the extent of their power, deposed himself; and in such a case it would appear that the civil principles of the constitution required that he should, in a certain sense, be re-elected to the crown by the people, before he was entitled to regard himself as king over any but such as had continued to recognise him in that character. He therefore remained beyond Jordan until the tribes should decide to recall him. It seems there was a general disposition among the people to do this; they blamed one another for their rebellion against the king, and their remissness in recalling him; but all seemed

* Hales, ii. 349.

to shrink from taking the first step in the matter. Judah, from its more intimate relations with David, might be expected to give the example; but Judah had been the head-quarters of the rebellion; and it appears that Jerusalem was in the occupation of Amasa, who, from the extent to which he had committed himself in Absalom's rebellion, might judge his case desperate, and hence use all his influence to prevent the king's return. This state of affairs being understood by David, he sent to the high-priests, who were still in Jerusalem, charging them to remind the elders of Judah of the obligation which seemed peculiarly to devolve upon them, and also to gain over Amasa by the offer to make him captain of the host in the place of Joab. This was attended with the desired result; and the elders of Judah sent back the answer, "Return thou, and all thy servants." On receiving this invitation, the king marched to the Jordan; and the men of Judah, on their part, assembled at Gilgal, to assist him over the river, and to receive him on his arrival. Among these, and foremost among them, were a thousand men of Benjamin, *headed by Shimei*, and including Ziba with his fifteen sons and twenty servants. No sooner had the king passed the river in a ferry-boat, than Shimei threw himself at his feet, acknowledged his former crime, but trusted that it would be forgiven in consideration of his being the first in all Israel (except Judah) to come forward with a powerful party, to promote his restoration. In consideration of this circumstance, and, what was a greater merit and benefit—that his party was from the tribe of Benjamin—it would have been a most ungracious act had the king been inexorable. He therefore pardoned him freely, although some of his officers were for putting him to death. For the like reason, probably,—that is, for fear of disgusting the valuable party to which he belonged, and in which he had much influence,—the king dared not entirely recall from Ziba the grant of Mephibosheth's lands which he had hastily made to him. When the son of Jonathan came to the Jordan to meet the king, he made it clear to him that he had been slandered by his steward, who had purposely neglected to provide him with the means of escape from Jerusalem when he purposed to join the king in his exile; so that, in consequence of his lameness, he had been obliged to remain behind; but, during his stay, had remained in retirement, and, as a mourner, had neither dressed his feet, trimmed his beard, nor changed his clothes. Under the circumstances, the king could only say, "Thou and Ziba divide the land;" to which the reply of Mephibosheth was worthy of the son of the generous Jonathan, "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

The rich old man of Gilead, Barzillai, who had so liberally ministered to the wants of David during his exile, came down to the Jordan to see him over. The king would fain have persuaded him to accompany him to Jerusalem, that he might have an opportunity of rewarding his services; but Barzillai returned the touching reply, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king; . . . . . let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, *that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother.*" He, however, recommended the fortunes of his son Chimham to the care of the king, who accordingly took that person with him to Jerusalem.

From the result, we may doubt the wisdom of the separate appeal which David had made to his own tribe of Judah, inasmuch as his more intimate connection with that tribe, by birth and by having reigned over it separately for seven years, required the most cautious policy on his side, to prevent his appearing to the other tribes as the king of a party. Now, when he had crossed the Jordan, people from all the tribes flocked to him to join in the act of recall and re-

storation. But when they came to consider of it, the other tribes were not willing to forgive Judah for having been beforehand with them; or, in other words, that, instead of inviting them to join with themselves in the act of recall, the elders of Judah, by acting independently, had enabled themselves to exhibit the appearance of more alacrity and zeal in the king's behalf, putting the other tribes in an unfavourable position by comparison. They alleged also their claim to be considered, on the ground that the ten tribes had tenfold the interest in the kingdom to that which the single tribe of Judah could claim. The answer of that tribe was the most impolitic and provoking that could be made. They alleged that seeing the king was of their own tribe, "is near of kin to us," they had a right to take a peculiar and exclusive interest in his recall. This quarrel grew so hot, as to strengthen the natural disposition of the tribes to regard David as the king of the Judahites; and but a slight impulse was wanting to induce them to leave him to his own party. This impulse was supplied by one Sheba, of the discontented tribe of Benjamin, who, perceiving the state of feeling, blew the trumpet, and gave forth the Hebrew watchword of revolt, "Every man to his tents, O Israel!" and, in the name of the tribes, disclaimed all further interest in David, and bade defiance to his adherents. The effect of this move, perhaps, exceeded his expectation. On a sudden he saw himself at the head of all the tribes, except that of Judah, which had occasioned this defection, and which was left almost alone to conduct the king from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

This circumstance, perhaps, supplied to David an additional motive for performing his secret promise of making Amasa captain of the host; as that person appears to have been high in favour with the tribes. But most readers will feel displeased that Joab should at this juncture—after the brilliant displays which he had so lately afforded of his loyalty, courage, and prudence—be displaced in favour of the rebel leader; and even if judged by the principles of the East, that every stroke of policy by which something may be gained, is a good stroke, whatever interests or honour it sacrifices,—even judged by this rule, the policy of this operation may very much be doubted, as, indeed, David himself had soon occasion to suspect. In fact, we agree with Hales, that in this David "seems to have acted rather ungratefully and unwisely, justifying Joab's reproach (on a former occasion), 'thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends.' But the old grudge and jealousy which he entertained against 'the sons of Zeruiah,' who were above his control, and too powerful to be punished, as in Abner's case, combined with Joab's disobedience of orders in killing Absalom, which he could never forget, nor forgive, to the day of his death, seem to have got the better of his usual temporising caution and political prudence."

Amasa, the new captain of the host, failed to assemble the forces of Judah, to act against Sheba, within the time which the king had appointed. Whether this arose from want of zeal or ability in him, or from the disgust of the Judahites at the removal of Joab from an office which he had filled with great distinction for twenty-seven years, we know not. The king was in consequence obliged to order Joab's brother, Abishai, to take the command of the royal guards, and pursue Sheba without delay, before he could get into the fenced cities; for that otherwise he might raise a rebellion more dangerous than Absalom's. On this occasion Joab went with Abishai as a volunteer, followed by the company which formed his private command, for his zeal for his king and country rose paramount above his sense of the disgrace which had recently been inflicted on him. But when Amasa, with the force he had collected, joined them at Gibeon to take the command, Joab, under the pretext of saluting him as his "*brother*," slew him, just as in a former time he had slain Abner. He then took the command himself, causing proclamation to be made,—"He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab." He then pursued Sheba, besieged him in a town to which he had fled, demanded his head from the inhabitants, and crushed the rebellion. He then returned

triumphant to Jerusalem, self-reinstated in his former station, of which David dared no more to deprive him.

About the thirty-fourth year of David's reign commenced a grievous famine, which continued for three successive years. When the sacred oracle was consulted, it declared that this was on account of the unatoned blood of the Gibeonites, whom Saul, in despite of the ancient treaty between that people and the Israelites, had cut off. This circumstance is not mentioned in the history of Saul; but, from the circumstances, it may perhaps be collected that Saul, finding the difficulty, to which we have adverted more than once, of forming a landed property for his family, where the land was already inalienably parcelled out among the people, had, under pretence of zeal for the interests of his own people, formed the design of utterly destroying the Gibeonites, and, as far as he was able, executed that design, giving their lands and wealth to his relatives, by the survivors of whom they were still possessed. As it therefore appeared that the calamity which punished this breach of national faith could only be averted through satisfaction being rendered to the remnant of the Gibeonites, David sent to learn what satisfaction they required. They, actuated by the powerful principles of revenge for blood, to which we had such frequent occasion to advert, refused to take "silver or gold," that is, a blood-fine, from the house of Saul, but demanded that execution should be performed upon seven members of that house. Seven members of Saul's family were accordingly sought out and given up to them. These were, two sons of Saul by his concubine Rizpah, and five grandsons by his eldest daughter Merab; Mephibosheth (who appears to have been the only other member of the family) was held back by David, on account of the covenant between him and Jonathan. The Gibeonites took these persons, and, after having slain them, hanged up their bodies on a hill. This was against the law, which forbids that a body should be kept hanging after the going down of the sun on the first day. How long they thus remained, is not stated; but the famine had been occasioned by drought, and they hung there until the rains of heaven fell upon them. It was then made known to David that Rizpah, the mother of two of them, had spread sackcloth for herself upon the rock, and had there remained to protect the bodies from the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Touched by this striking instance of the tenderness of maternal affection, David not only directed the bodies of these persons to be taken down, but he went [or sent] to Jabesh Gilead, to remove from under the oak in that place, the bones of Saul and Jonathan, and deposit them, with all respect, in the family sepulchre at Kelah in Benjamin, together with the remains of these unhappy members of their house.

David has been censured by some writers for consenting to the demand of the Gibeonites; but we have wasted the pains which, at different times, we have taken in expounding the doctrine of avengement for blood, if the reader has not perceived that the demand of the Gibeonites was one which the king could not refuse. *They* might have accepted the blood-fine; but this was optional with them, and they were perfectly entitled to refuse it, and to demand blood for blood. That the persons who were slain had themselves no hand in the crime for which they were punished is more than we know; it is most likely that they were active parties in it, and still more that they reaped the profits of it. But even were this not the case, it is a well-known principle of blood-avengement that the heirs and relatives of the blood-shedder are responsible for the blood in their own persons, in case the avenger is not able to reach the actual perpetrator. That David had any interest in getting rid of these persons is equally absurd and untrue, for they made no pretensions to the crown themselves, nor did others make such pretensions for them. Even when the cause of Saul's house was most in want of a head, none of these persons appeared to advance their claims, nor did the warmest partisans of the cause dream of producing any of them in opposition to David.

Now that the Israelites had been weakened by two rebellions and three years of famine,

the Philistines deemed the opportunity favourable for an attempt to shake off their yoke. They therefore renewed the war about the thirty-seventh year of David's reign, but were defeated in four engagements, and finally subdued. In all these engagements the Philistines exhibited their old passion for bringing gigantic champions into the field. In the first of these engagements, David himself, notwithstanding his years, shrunk not from the combat with the giant Izbi-benob; but he waxed faint, and was in danger of being slain, had not the brave and trusty Abishai hastened to his relief, and killed the gigantic Philistine. After this the people would no more allow David to go forth in person to battle, "that thou quench not the light of Israel." This war completely extinguished the gigantic race to which Goliath had belonged.

The numbering of the people was one of the last and most reprehensible acts of the reign of David. In itself, an enumeration of the population might be not only innocent but useful; it was the motive by which the deed was rendered evil. This motive, so offensive to God, was obviously supplied by the design of forcing all the Israelites into military service, with a view to foreign conquests; a design not only pitiable in so old a man, but in every way repugnant to both the internal and external polity of the theocratical government. That the census was not, as in former times, taken through the priests and magistrates, but by Joab, as commander-in-chief, assisted by the other military chiefs, sufficiently indicates the military object of the census; and if they were accompanied by the regular troops under their command, as the mention of their "encamping" leads one to suspect, it may be seen that the object was known to and disliked by the people, and that the census could only be taken in the presence of a military force. Indeed the measure was repugnant to the wishes of the military commanders themselves, and was in a peculiar degree abhorrent to Joab, who saw the danger to the liberties of the people, and gave it all the opposition in his power, and undertook it reluctantly, when he found the king adhered to his purpose with all the obstinacy of age.

At the end of nine months and twenty days, Joab brought to the king the return of the adult male population, which was 900,000 men in the ten tribes of Israel, and 400,000, in round numbers, in the tribe of Judah alone; being together 1,300,000. But the tribes of Levi and Benjamin were not included in this account; for Joab did not finish the enumeration, probably in consequence of some indications of the Divine displeasure in the course of it. According to usual proportions, the entire population of Israel at this time (without including these two tribes) could not well have been less than 5,200,000. The same marks of the Divine displeasure which prevented the completion of the census, were probably those which awakened the slumbering conscience of David when the return was presented to him. He confessed before God that he had sinned, and prayed to be forgiven. The next morning it was made known to him, through the prophet Gad, that he had sinned indeed, and that his sin was not of such a nature as, with a due regard to the public principles of the government, could be allowed to pass without signal punishment. The choice of punishment was offered to him,—seven years of famine, three months to be pursued by his enemies, or three days of pestilence. The humbled monarch confessed the choice to be hard, but fixed on the latter alternative, as the more equal punishment, and such as seemed more immediately under the direction of Heaven. Accordingly, Jehovah sent a pestilence, which in the course of two days destroyed 70,000 men, from Dan to Beersheba. It was then beginning to visit Jerusalem, when God was pleased to put a stop to it, at the earnest prayer of David. He beheld the commissioned angel stand in the threshing-floor of Araunah, a chief person among the Jebusites, as one preparing to destroy. And then he and the elders of Israel, all clad in sackcloth, fell upon their faces, and the king cried:—"Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned

and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Jehovah, my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued." This noble prayer was granted as soon as uttered. Through the prophet Gad, he was commanded to erect an altar, and offer sacrifices on that spot of ground where he had seen the destroying angel stand. The king accordingly bought the threshing-floor from Araunah (who would willingly have given it free of cost) for fifty shekels of silver*; he then hastened to erect an altar, and to offer thereon burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings; and a miraculous fire which descended from the heavens and consumed the victims, gave manifest proof of the Divine complacency, and so sanctified the spot as to point it out for the site of the future temple. The plague was stayed.

David was now advancing towards seventy years of age, and it appeared from the declining state of his health that his latter end could not be far off. This made Adonijah, his eldest surviving son, determine to take measures to secure the throne, which, had it been hereditary, would naturally have devolved to him. He doubtless knew that the crown had been assigned to his younger brother Solomon, and he felt that this was perhaps his only opportunity of asserting what he conceived to be his natural rights. Adonijah was a very handsome man, and he had not at any time been baulked or contradicted by his father, many of whose sorrows arose from his excessive indulgence of his children. He now, in apparent imitation of Absalom, set up a splendid retinue, and courted popularity among the people; and he succeeded in drawing over to his party Joab, who now at last forsook his old master, and Abiathar the high-priest, who had shared all his fortunes. One day, when matters seemed ripe for the further development of his designs, he made a grand entertainment at Ain Rogel, the fountain in the king's garden, to which he invited all the king's sons, with the significant exception of Solomon; and the principal persons in the state, with the exception of those who were known to be in Solomon's interest. There he was proclaimed king in the usual form, "God save king Adonijah!" by the powerful party assembled.

In this important emergency, Nathan the prophet sent Bathsheba to inform the king of these proceedings, and afterwards came in himself and confirmed her account. By both he was reminded of his previous declarations, that Solomon was to be his successor in the throne. The old king was roused to his wonted energy by this intelligence; he instantly appointed Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, Benaiah, and his own guards the Cherethites and Pelethites who continued faithful, to take Solomon, and conduct him, mounted on the king's own mule, to the fountain of Gihon, and there to anoint and proclaim him king. The ceremony was thus attended with every circumstance which could give it authority in the eyes of the people, as indicating the intention of the king, which, it was now well known, was according to the will of God. There was the mule, which none but David had ever been seen to ride, and which, he having habitually ridden, none but a king might ride; there was the prophet who could only sanction that which he knew to be the will of God; there was Zadok, with the holy anointing oil from the tabernacle; and there were the guards, whom the people had been accustomed to see in attendance only on the king. The whole ceremony was also directed to take place on one of the most public and frequented roads leading from Jerusalem. The people were adequately impressed by all these considerations and circumstances,—they heartily shouted, "God save king Solomon!" The earth was, as it were, rent with the rejoicing clamour, mixed with the sounds of trumpets and of pipes. The

* This was little more than six pounds of our money. There is an apparent contradiction between the account in 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, and 1 Chron. xxi. 25, which says that David gave Araunah 600 shekels *of gold* by weight (which would be no less than 1200*l.* of our money); but this may be removed by the supposition that after David knew, by the acceptance of the altar erected on the spot, that the temple was to be built in this place, he made a further purchase of a sufficient site for the additional and much larger sum just named.

party of Adonijah heard the noise; and when informed of the cause, they were all so struck with consternation at the promptitude and effect of this counter-move, that they dispersed immediately, and slunk away every man to his own house. Adonijah, seeing himself thus forsaken, and dreading nothing less than immediate death, fled to the refuge of the altar (erected on the threshing-floor of Araunah). Solomon being informed of this, sent to tell him that if by his future conduct he proved himself a worthy man, he would not hurt a hair of his head; but at the same time assured him that any future instance of a disloyal intention would be fatal to him. On leaving the altar Adonijah went and rendered his homage to the new king, after which he was ordered to retire to his own house.

The waning spark of David's life gleamed up once again before it finally expired. He availed himself of this to call a general assembly of the nation, to ratify the coronation of Solomon, and to receive the declaration of his views and designs. The aged king was able to stand up on his feet as he addressed the assembly at considerable length. Perceiving from the revolts of Absalom and Adonijah, into which last some of his own stanchest friends had been drawn, that the principle of primogeniture was likely to interfere very seriously with the true doctrine of the theocracy, he was careful to point out how the sceptre had been assigned to Judah, not the firstborn of Jacob; and in the tribe of Judah, to the family of Jesse. not the first or most powerful of that tribe; and of the eight sons of Jesse, to David the youngest; and of the sons of David, to Solomon, at a time when there were living three (if not four*) older than he. He then proceeded to state the reasons which had prevented him from building to the Lord that temple which he had designed, and since this great work had been reserved for the peaceable reign of his son, he solemnly exhorted him and the nation to erect that temple, according to the model which he had himself supplied, and to contribute liberally themselves towards it, in addition to the ample stores and materials, which in the course of his reign he had been enabled to provide. He concluded with a most noble and devout thanksgiving to the Lord for all the mercies which he had shown to himself and to his people; and this, with the rest of his conduct on this occasion, shows that whatever were now the bodily infirmities of the aged king, his better faculties were still in their prime.

Solomon was now again anointed king in the presence, and with the sanction of the assembly, by Zadok, who himself was now declared and recognised as sole high-priest, Abiathar being deposed from his participation in that dignity on account of his having gone over to Adonijah. It is impossible not to see in all this a strenuous assertion by David of the theocratical principles of the constitution, which rendered conclusive and final any appointment which the Divine King had made, or might make. And for this he deserves the more honour, as there is good reason to think th t, for himself merely, as a father, he would quite as soon have seen Absalom or Adonijah on the throne as Solomon. Of Abiathar it was quite necessary to make an example; for as high-priest he, of all men, ought to have been sensible of the obligation of the divine appointment, the maintenance of which had now become one of the most marked and grand prerogatives of Jehovah as King of the Hebrews, and the one which was calculated to keep His superiority present to the minds of the people. If this prerogative were allowed to be contemned by the high-priest, who should be its most strenuous supporter, the people would not be likely to hold it in much respect.

The enthusiasm manifested by the king for the object which, for many years past, he had so much at heart, kindled a corresponding zeal in the people, who presented liberal offerings for the great work which Solomon was destined to execute.

The following day was spent as a high festival. Holocausts of numerous steers, and rams, and lambs were offered to

* Chileab, the son of Abigail, is not historically named. The probability is that he died early.

Jehovah; and also abundant peace-offerings on which the people feasted, with great gladness, before they departed to their homes. This was, in fact, the coronation feast of Solomon. He, being now twice anointed, and formally recognised by the people, mounted the throne of his father, and administered the government while David still lived.

It was not, however, long before David felt that his last hour approached. He then sent for his son, to give to him his last counsels. He first of all recapitulated the gracious promises which God had made to him and his posterity, and then reminded Solomon that these promises were only, in their first and obvious sense, to be understood as conditional, and depending upon their observance of the divine law; so that they might expect their prosperity to rise and fall in proportion to their obedience. He then proceeded to advise him as to the course he should take with reference to certain persons whom his own history has brought conspicuously under the notice of the reader. The predominating influence of the sons of Zeruiah had, throughout his reign, been very galling to himself, and he advised his son not to incur the same grievance, or to submit to it. As to Joab, he had, through policy, been pardoned for his part in Adonijah's rebellion, as David himself had, from like reasons, been compelled to overlook the crimes of which he had been guilty—such as the murders of Abner and Amasa: yet should he again offend, Solomon was advised to bring him to condign punishment, by which he would strike terror into evil doers, and, more than by any other act, evince the strength and firmness of his government.

The pardon which Shimei had asked, beside the Jordan, with a thousand men at his back, could not well have been refused; and David had no wish to annul it. But aware of the character of this disaffected and dangerous Benjamite, he cautioned Solomon against him, and advised him to keep him under his eye in Jerusalem, and watch him well, that he might have no opportunity of stirring up seditions among the tribes. And should his conduct again offer occasion, David counselled the young king not to spare him, but at once rid his kingdom of so suspicious and malevolent a character.

David appears to have survived the coronation of Solomon about six months; for although he reigned seven years and six months over Judah, and thirty-three years over all Israel, yet the whole duration is reckoned only forty years in 2 Sam. v. 4, 5; 1 Chron. xxix. 27. The interval he seems to have employed in the development, for the benefit of his son, of those plans and regulations which had long before been formed and considered in his own mind, and to which the due effect was afterwards given by his son. These are fully stated in the five first chapters of the second book of Chronicles.

David was seventy years of age when he "slept with his fathers." At that time certainly the period of human life was reduced to the present standard; for, in recording his death at this age, the historian says, "He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour." He was buried in a stately tomb, which, according to a touching custom, still prevalent in the East, he had *prepared for himself*, in that part of the city (on Mount Zion) which he had covered with buildings, and which was called after him, "the city of David."

Our view of the character of David has been incorporated with the preceding history of his reign. We are, therefore, unwilling to offer any separate summary of that character; and with pleasure avail ourselves of the sketch which Jahn has supplied,—the rather as it will be found fully conformable to the view we have taken:—

"David, as a man, was, in his sentiments and conduct, a true Israelite: as a king he was a faithful vassal of Jehovah. The Psalms, in which he pours forth his whole heart, exhibit a sincere and zealous worshipper of the true God, who places his religion, not in offerings, prayers, hymns, and other external acts of devotion, but in obedience to the divine precepts, in which he seeks and finds all his happiness. God,

and obedience to his will, is with David everywhere the first and predominant idea, which consoles him in his flight from Saul, and attends him to the throne.

"All deliverance from danger, and all victories, from the first over Goliath to that over the Mesopotamian and Syrian kings, he expected from the aid of God, and attributed to the assistance of the Supreme Judge of men and nations. As became a viceroy of Jehovah, he in all enterprises viewed himself as dependent on God, and bound to execute the designs of his lord and sovereign. He therefore scrupulously followed the directions of the sacred oracle and the prophets; he supported the authority of the priests and Levites, though he was so far from being governed by them, that he, on the contrary, prescribed to them laws and institutions; he dedicated to the sanctuary the spoil, for which he was indebted to the providence of Jehovah, that at some future period a palace might be erected more suitable to the majesty of God; he loved his subjects, caused justice to be done to them, called them his brethren, and thought himself not degraded by mingling with them in public worship, like any other subject of Jehovah. The Hebrews, therefore, during the reign of David, clearly recognised the theocratical nature of their constitution.

"The imprecations and curses in the Psalms of David are to be judged of according to the knowledge and situation of the ancient world. They refer either to inimical nations or to individual oppressors of the people, and so are nothing more than prayers for victory and deliverance; or they refer to the personal enemies of David, and thus are indications of what transgressors are to expect from a just God, and, consequently, admonitions to the readers or singers not to suffer themselves to be borne away by a torrent of iniquity and vice. Poets express everything strongly, and under their pen, advice and admonition become a blessing or a curse. Such strong expressions, therefore, are so many proofs of a zealous love of virtue and an irreconcilable hatred of sin. With a view to warn and deter from vice, the Hebrews, according to the law of Moses, were accustomed solemnly to pronounce curses on the secret transgressors of the law; and, considered in this light, who can justly find fault with the practice? Yea, even God himself, in this theocracy, laid curses, that is, threatenings of temporal punishment on transgressors. After all, these curses in the Psalms of David may be in part ascribed to the translators; and the original text, properly understood, may contain merely threatenings of what would take place as the punishment of crime. If David was in reality so vindictive as his curses seem to intimate, why did he not make Saul, his greatest enemy, feel the weight of his vengeance when he had him in his power? How, in such a situation, could a revengeful man restrain himself?

"The adultery with Bathsheba, and the murderous transaction with Uriah, are shocking crimes, which David himself is so far from excusing, that he confesses and laments them with the greatest horror. But how earnest was his repentance, and with what submission to the will of God did he bear those calamities which were sent for his punishment, and which, as they were caused by his own children, must have been so much the more distressing to his tender parental feelings! Do we not here again see the soul entirely and steadily devoted to God?

"The numbering of the people in order, as it would seem, to push conquests into foreign countries, and the abovementioned transaction with Bathsheba, are the only two instances in which David seems to have forgotten himself and his God. He was indeed no ideal model of human perfection: he was not without the blemishes incident to human nature; but on the whole he was an example worthy of the imitation of his successors, and according as they appear on comparison with him, the sacred writers estimate their characters."

The important part which David took in the organization of the Hebrew state, and even of the church, has already been alluded to, and a cursory view of such of his

operations as are known to us may be suitably introduced in this place.

The question respecting a standing army is not one which, on its abstract political grounds, requires here to be noticed. From the peculiar nature of the Hebrew constitution, there are few public questions which admit of being considered solely with reference to their general policy. In so considering them we always find that some essential matter as regards the Israelites, has been overlooked and omitted. In Palestine, as generally in the East at this day, every citizen was from his childhood trained to the use of arms; and therefore the state possessed in its people a body of ready-trained militia, so far lessening the need of a standing army. And, certainly, if there ever was a state in which a standing army was unnecessary in itself, and repugnant to the first principles of the constitution, that was the state of Israel. But kings will have standing armies of some kind or other. And David was a king far from being untainted with the vice of military ambition. He increased and organized the army founded by Saul; and was disposed to have gone far greater and more dangerous lengths in his latter days, but for the very serious check which his numbering the people, for military objects, incurred.

As organized by David, the army consisted of 288,000 men, every 24,000 of whom had a separate commander, the whole being under the "captain of the host," who, during nearly the whole of David's reign, was Joab. The divisions of 24,000 performed military duty alternately, namely, a month at a time in succession, so that all of them went home and attended to their own affairs during eleven months in the year. We know nothing about their pay; but, from the analogy of similar things, we should judge that only the 24,000 in actual service were supported and equipped from the royal treasury. It is not likely that they had any pay in money, but they had a due share of the spoil in time of war.

A division of the army, when in the field, is mentioned in this reign*, but it did not originate with David, as it occurs on various previous occasions†. These divisions appear to have corresponded to the centre and right and left wings of modern armies; and the commanders of them appear to be those to whom the name of שלשים, *shalishim*, is given, and were persons of high consideration.

How great was the authority of the commander-in-chief appears throughout the history of David, whether we look to Abner or to Joab; and that this officer continued to enjoy great influence in later times, is indicated in 2 Kings iv. 13.

Besides the regular army, David had a guard, which was at all times in attendance. It seems, as we have already noticed, to have been composed of two corps or bands, which are mentioned in the history as the Cherethites and Pelethites. Some have conjectured that they were foreigners from the etymology of their names: this is uncertain, but for the fact that they formed the royal guard, we have the authority of Josephus; and the Chaldee paraphrast alleges that they were respectively slingers and archers. The body of Gathites, of which Ittai was commander, we do not ourselves question formed a guard about the person of the king. The policy or principle of such a guard of foreigners needs no further illustration than a reference to the Swiss guards of the former kings of France.

The opposition and almost all but the genealogical distinction between the Israelites and the ancient inhabitants of the land, seems to have entirely disappeared in the time of David, so that persons of Canaanitish origin found employment in the armies of the king. Such was Uriah *the Hittite*, who appears even to have held a subordinate command, and was obviously a person of some consequence. Of still greater importance was Araunah the Jebusite, whom some take to have been a native prince, who retained, even in Jerusalem, much consequence and property, which last was so much respected, that David would not accept the smallest portion of it as a present,

* 2 Sam. xviii.

† Gen. xiv. 14, 15; Job i. 17; Judges vii. 16, 20; 1 Sam. xi. 11.

but insisted on paying for it. There is, however, much reason to conclude that these and many other Canaanites had become proselytes to the Jewish faith.

To return to David's military establishments. An ingenious writer is of opinion that his band of "worthies" formed a sort of order of knighthood. From 2 Sam. xxiii. 8—39, it appears that the heroes or 'mighty men,' during the reign of David, were thirty-seven in number, including Joab, who was commander-in-chief of all his forces. These warriors were divided into three classes, the first and second of which consisted each of three men, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah; Abishai, Benaiah, and Asahel; and the third class was composed of the remaining thirty, of whom Asahel appears to have been the head. Such is the list, according to 2 Sam. xxiii.; but in 1 Chron. ix. 10—47, the list is more numerous, and differs considerably from the preceding. The most probable solution of these variations is, that the first list contains the worthies who lived in the former part of David's reign, and that it underwent various changes in the course of his government of the kingdom of Israel. At the head of all these 'mighty men' was Jashobeam, the son of Hachmoni (1 Chron. xi. 11), who, from his office, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 (Hebrew and marginal reading), is termed '*Josheb-Bassebet, the Tachmonite, head of the three,*' and whose military appellation was '*Adino-he-Ezni* (*the lifting up, or striking with the spear*),' because he lifted up the spear against, or encountered, 300 soldiers at once. However extraordinary it may seem, we may here perceive a distinct order of knighthood, similar to our modern orders, and presenting the same honorary degrees, and of which Jashobeam, according to modern parlance, was the grand master. An institution of this kind was, in every respect, adapted to the reign, the character, and the policy of David."*

Our acquaintance with the measures taken by David in the organization of the civil government, is almost confined to the names and offices of the several functionaries to whom he confided various departments of the public business. Most of these offices were probably introduced by him; and are, for the most part, such as were found in the ancient and existing governments of the East. The information is valuable in so far as it makes us acquainted with the fashion after which the business of the state was distributed: but as the organization commenced by David was more fully elaborated by Solomon, it will be better to connect with his reign such further notice as it requires.

During the reign of David the Israelites experienced few of the evils from the kingly government which Samuel had predicted. The question, how the regal establishments and standing army were to be supported, does not appear to have occurred. His conquests in the neighbouring countries brought him such immense spoil, as, together with the produce of the permanent tributes imposed on the conquered nations, enabled him not only to support all his expenses, but to lay by vast wealth towards the erection of the temple to be built by his successor. For this great work, which for many years he had so much at heart, and which appears to have engaged a large portion of his thoughts, his preparations of every kind were so extensive, that he appears to us fully entitled to the chief share of whatever glory the founder of that celebrated fabric may fairly claim. For not only did he provide a great proportion of all kinds of materials, with vast quantities of gold and silver, but he purchased and prepared the site, and furnished Solomon with the plan of the building. His care extended still further; for he re-organized the whole Levitical institution, with a view to a more splendid ritual service in the future temple, and to the equal distribution of duties among the whole Levitical tribe. All his arrangements in this matter were religiously adhered to by Solomon, in assigning the priests and Levites their service in the new temple. For this reason it appears more advisable to notice these arrangements for the temple service, in connection with that account of the temple itself which the next chapter will contain.

* Coquerel, 'Biographie Sacrée,' tom. ii., p. 167; cited by Horne, iii. 220.

CHAPTER III.

SOLOMON.

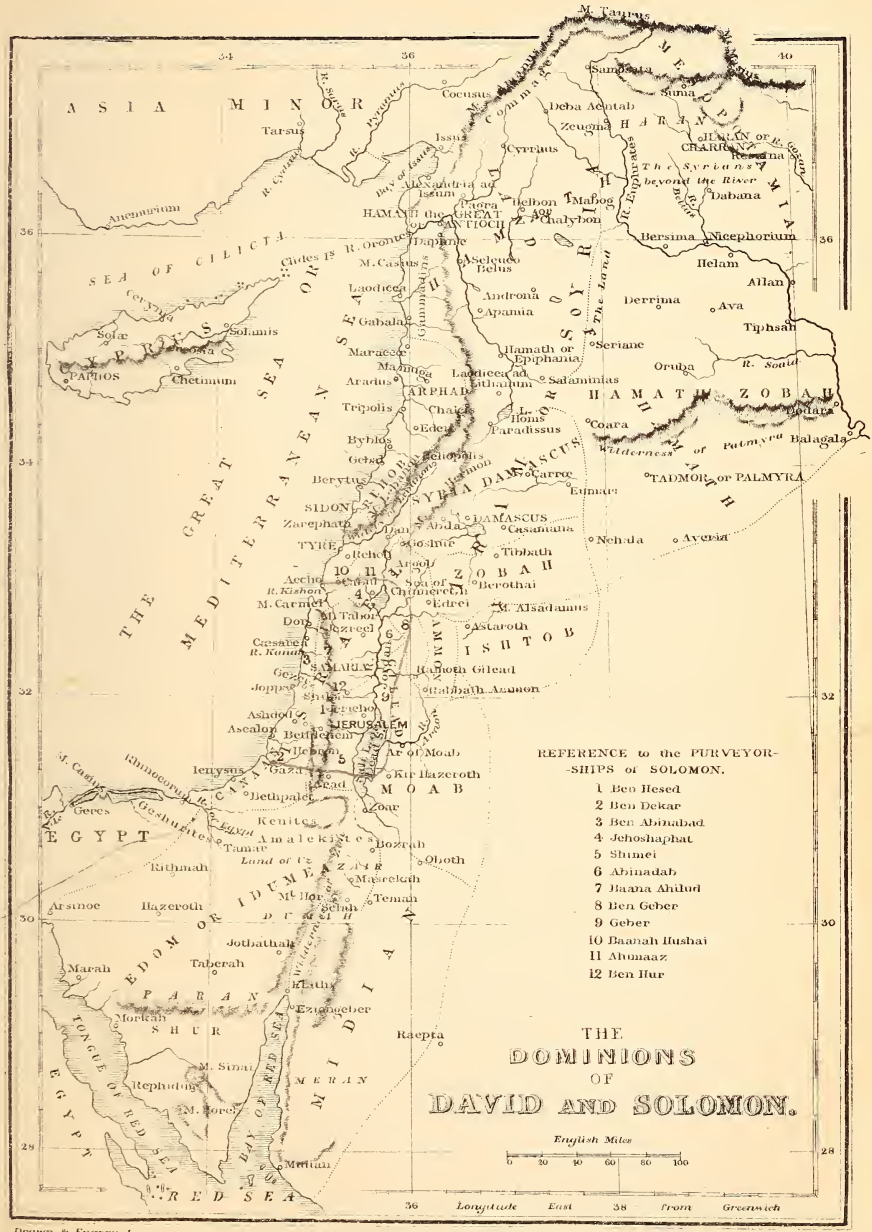
KING SOLOMON succeeded his father David in the year 1030 B.C., when he was about twenty years of age. Never monarch ascended the throne with greater advantages, or knew better how to secure and improve them. Under David, the kingdom had been much extended, and brought under good regulations. The arms of the Hebrews had for so many years been feared by all the neighbouring nations, that the habit of respect and obedience on their part, offered to the new king the reasonable prospect, confirmed by a Divine promise, that his reign should be one of peace. *Now*, the predominant tribe of Judah lay as a lion and as a lioness, which no nation ventured to rouse up*. The Hebrews were the ruling people, and their empire the principal monarchy of Western Asia. From the Mediterranean Sea and the Phœnicians to the Euphrates, in its nearer and remoter bounds,—from the river of Egypt and the Elanitic Gulf to Berytus, Hamath, and Thapsacus, all were subject to the dominion of Solomon; nor were the tribes which wander in northern Arabia, eastward to the Persian Gulf, unconscious of his rule. At home, the Canaanites had not, as we have seen, been either entirely expelled or annihilated; but they had become obedient and peaceable subjects, and, which was of importance to an eastern king, liable to services which no king dared to impose upon the Israelites themselves. Jahn calculates that their whole number may have been about 400,000 or 500,000, since ultimately 153,000 were able to render soccage to the king. The warlike and civilized Philistines, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, the Syrians of Damascus, and some tribes of the nomadic Arabians of the desert, were all tributary to him. The revenues derived from the subject states were large; and the wealth in the royal treasures great beyond calculation: and the king had the enterprise and talent to open new sources through which riches were poured into the country from distant lands. Nor were the prospects and promises with which this reign opened, frustrated in its continuance. "Peace gave to all his subjects prosperity; the trade which he introduced brought wealth into the country, and promoted the sciences and arts, which there found an active protector in the king, who was himself distinguished for his learning. The building of the temple and of several palaces introduced foreign artists, by whom the Hebrews were instructed. Many foreigners, and even sovereign princes, were attracted to Jerusalem, in order to see and converse with the prosperous royal sage. The regular progress of all business, the arrangements for security from foreign and domestic enemies, the army, the cavalry, the armories, the chariots, the palaces, the royal household, the good order in the administration, and in the service of the court, excited as much admiration as the wisdom and learning of the viceroy of JEHOVAH. *So much was effected by the single influence of David, because he scrupulously* conformed himself to the theocracy of the Hebrew state."†

Such is the *argument* to the history of Solomon's reign, to the details of which we now proceed.

Although Solomon was not the first-born, nor even the eldest living son of David, but succeeded to the throne through the special appointment of the Supreme King, Jehovah, —there was one circumstance which, from the usual notions of the orientals, could not but be highly favourable to him, even had *all* his elder brothers been alive. Amnon had been born before his father became king, and Absalom and Adonijah while he was king of Judah only; while Solomon was born when his father was king over all Israel, and lord over many neighbouring

* Gen. xlix. 9; Num. xxiii. 24, xxiv. 9.

† Jahn, b. iv. sect. 33.


ASIA MINOR
MESOPOTAMIA
SYRIA DAMASCENA
THE GREAT SEA OR MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SEA OF CILICIA
CYPRUS
PHOENICIA
HAMATH ZOBAH
ISHTOB
MOAB
EDOM OR IDUMEA
ARABIA DESERTA
EGYPT
RED SEA
TONGUE OF THE RED SEA
GULF OF THE RED SEA
Tarsus
Issus
Cyrrhus
Cocusus
Deba Acetab
Zeugma
HARAN or CHARRAN
Carrhæ
Samosata
Suma
Dabana
Bersima
Nicephorium
Helam
Allan
Ava
Tiphsah
Seriane
Oruba
Derrina
Anemurium
Solæ
Solamis
PAPHOS
Chetimum
Gabala
Laodicea
Antioch the GREAT
Daphne
Seleucea Belus
Apamia
Hamath or Epiphania
Laodicea ad Libanum
Salamminas
Arphad
Tripolis
Chalcis
Byblos
Edessa
Gebal
Berytus
Sidon
Zarephath
Dan
Abila
Damascus
Casamana
Nehala
Aversa
Tyre
Rehob
Tibhath
Aroer
Chimmereh
Berothai
Edrei
Astaroth
Ashtaroth Karnaim
Rabboth Gilead
Jabbok
Ammon
Aroer of Moab
Kir Hareseth
Kir
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Hebron
Gaza
Rhinocorura
Ienysus
Rhinocolura
Gerar
Kadesh
Jethpalel
Zoar
Kenites
Amalekites
Tamar
Bozrah
Oboth
Rithmah
Land of Uz
Mesrekah
Temah
Arsinoe
Hazeroth
Jothathah
Taberah
Marah
Elath
Ezion-geber
Mount Horeb
Raepta
Rephidim
Mount Sinai
Meribah
Mount Seir
Mount Hor
Zalmonah
Wilderness of Palmyra
TADMOR or PALMYRA
Balagala
Aleppo
Euphrates
Chaboras
Mabog
Chalybon
Helbon
Abe
Beroea
Issus
Cydnus
Orontes
Jordan
Arnon
Kishon
Kanah
Sihor
Land of Goshen
Land of the Philistines
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Shur
Wilderness of Sin
Wilderness of Meran
Midian
Arabia Deserta
The Syrians beyond the River
The Land
Commagena
Cappadocia
Mesopotamia
Sea of Galilee
Sea of Asphaltites
Sea of Tiberias
Lake Semechonitis
Lake Merom
Lake Asphaltites
Mediterranean Sea
Great Sea
Red Sea
Gulf of the Red Sea
Tongue of the Red Sea
Egypt
Gulf of Issus
Bay of Issus
Gulf of Cilicia
Sea of Cilicia
Cyprus
Phœnicia
Syria Damascena
Mesopotamia
Arabia Deserta
Idumea
Judea
Moab
Ammon
Ishtob
Hamath Zobah
Edom or Idumea
Paran
Shur
Midian
Meran
Arabia Deserta
Land of Uz
Land of Goshen
Land of the Philistines
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Shur
Wilderness of Sin
Wilderness of Meran
Wilderness of Palmyra
Mount Seir
Mount Hor
Mount Sinai
Mount Horeb
Zalmonah
Meribah
Rephidim
Raepta
Zoar
Kenites
Amalekites
Rithmah
Arsinoe
Hazeroth
Jothathah
Taberah
Marah
Elath
Ezion-geber
Mordah
Gerar
Kadesh
Jethpalel
Rhinocolura
Ienysus
Gaza
Ashdod
Ascalon
Bethlehem
Hebron
Jerusalem
Joppa
Shihor
Gebal
Casarea
Dor
Accho
Tabor
Kezreel
Jezreel
Chimmereh
Berothai
Edrei
Astaroth
Ashtaroth Karnaim
Rabboth Gilead
Jabbok
Ammon
Aroer of Moab
Kir Hareseth
Kir
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Hebron
Gaza
Ashdod
Ascalon

states. And in the East there is a strong prejudice in favour of him who is the son of *the king* and of *the kingdom*, that is, who is born while his father actually *reigns* over the states which he leaves at his death. Thus, therefore, if at the death of David, Amnon and Absalom had been alive, as well as Adonijah and Solomon, there might have been a contest among them on these grounds:—Amnon would have claimed as the eldest son of David; Absalom would probably have disputed this claim on the ground, first, that he was the first-born *after David became a king;* and, secondly, on the ground that his mother was of a royal house: this claim could not have been disputed by Adonijah; but he would have considered his own claim good as against Amnon, on the one hand, and as against Solomon on the other. But Solomon might have claimed on the same ground as the others against Amnon; and against Absalom and Adonijah, on the ground that their father was only king of Judah when they were born, but king of all Israel at the time of his own birth. And this claim would, in fact, have been but a carrying out of the principle on which Absalom and Adonijah are supposed to oppose Amnon; and in this claim there would have seemed so much reason to an oriental, that, apart from all other considerations, we doubt not it would have found many adherents in Israel; and we *have* no doubt that it did operate in producing a more cheerful acquiescence in the preference given to Solomon.

Soon after the death of his father, Solomon discovered a new plot of Adonijah's, so deeply laid and carefully veiled, that he even ventured to make the king's own mother, Bathsheba, an acting though unconscious party in it. And here it may be proper to observe, that in eastern countries, where polygamy is allowed, or not forbidden, by the law, and where the kings have numerous wives and concubines, there is no dignity analogous to that which the sole wife of a sovereign occupies in Europe. In fact, there is no *queen*, in our sense of the word, as applied to the consort of a king. But the *mother* of the king (and next to her, or instead of her, the mother of the heir apparent) is the woman of the greatest influence and highest station in the state, and the one whose condition is the most queenly of any which the East affords. According to this view, Bathsheba—during the latter part of David's reign, as mother of the heir apparent, and during at least the early portion of Solomon's reign, as mother of the king,—was, in fact, the queen of Israel; whence in both periods we find her taking a part in public affairs, which, however slight, is such as none but a woman so placed could have taken.

The first manifestation of Adonijah's design was to endeavour to procure permission to espouse Abishag, one of the wives of his father, whom he had taken in his last days and had left a virgin. He had the address to interest Bathsheba in his object, and to get her to propose the subject to the king, although part of what he said to her as an inducement was well calculated to awaken her suspicions: "Thou knowest," said he, "that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it is from the Lord."

The king was seated on his throne when Bathsheba appeared before him to urge the suit of Adonijah. He rose when he beheld her, and bowed to her; after which he caused a seat to be brought and placed at his right hand for her. She then made the "one small petition" with which she was charged. The king instantly saw through the whole; and knew enough of the several parties to feel assured (or actually knew) that the measure had been prompted by Joab and Abiathar, or that at least they were parties to the ulterior design. According to what we have already stated respecting the widows of a deceased king, it is obvious that Solomon recognised in this insidious demand a plan formed to accredit the former pretensions of Adonijah. He, therefore, answered warmly, "And why dost thou ask Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, *and for*

Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." By this he clearly intimated that he considered Joab and Abiathar as parties in this new plot, and, as such, liable to the punishments which he proceeded to inflict. Adonijah he ordered to be put to death, as one whom it was no longer safe to pardon. On receiving this news, Joab justified the suspicions (if not more) of the king, by fleeing for refuge to the sanctuary of the altar—a plain act of a guilty conscience. When this was told to Solomon, he ordered Benaiah to go and put him to death. Benaiah went, and ordered him, in the king's name, to come forth. This he refused, saying, "Nay, but I will die here!" either in the hope that Solomon would so far regard the altar, as not to slay him, or that he would die there in the hope that God, whose altar it was, would be gracious to him. This being a new case, in which Benaiah liked not to act on his own responsibility, he returned to report the matter to the king, who, with great firmness, and with a freedom from superstition which shows how well he understood the letter and spirit of the law, said, "Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father." So Joab was slain at the altar, and buried in the garden of his own house in the wilderness. Benaiah, who had been his executioner, was made commander-in-chief in his room. It appears that in the Hebrew kingdom, as in some other ancient, and some modern states, it was the duty of the king's chief officer to execute his sentence upon high offenders.

As to Abiathar, who had before joined Adonijah, and was no stranger to the more recent intrigue, he had shared the fate of Joab, if the king had not been mindful of his early and long-continued attachment to David, and respected the sacred character he bore. He was commanded to withdraw to his estate in Anathoth, and no longer presume to exercise his sacerdotal functions. Thus was the house of Eli finally degraded in the person of Abiathar, and the house of Eleazar completely restored in the person of Zadok.

This affair reminded Solomon of the necessity of keeping watch over another disaffected person, Shimei, as counselled by David. He therefore ordered him to fix his residence in Jerusalem, which he engaged him by oath not to leave, forewarning him that the breach of this engagement would be at the expense of his life. Of this, Shimei was properly mindful for two years; but then he was induced to leave the city, and went as far as Gath (a suspicious quarter) in pursuit of two runaway slaves. He was, therefore, on his return, consigned to the sword of Benaiah.

By the removal of these dangerous persons, Solomon felt his throne secured to

[Pharaoh's Daughter.]

him. He then sought an alliance worthy of the rank to which his kingdom had attained. The nearest power, from an alliance with which even he might derive honour, was that of Egypt. He therefore demanded and received the daughter of the reigning Pharaoh in marriage. Of this princess the annexed figure * is supposed by Rosellini to be a portrait, as it more certainly is of *a* daughter of a king who reigned about the time of Solomon. His new spouse was received by the king of Israel with great magnificence, and was lodged in "the city of David," until the new and splendid palace, which he had already commenced, should be

* This is, in fact, a portrait of the daughter of Shishak, the Egyptian king, who invaded Judæa early in the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam; from which circumstance, as well as from the distance of time, he is not probably the same king whose daughter Solomon married.

completed. That Solomon should thus contract an alliance, on equal terms, with the reigning family of that great nation which had formerly held the Israelites in bondage, was, in the ordinary point of view, a great thing for him, and shows the relative importance into which the Hebrew kingdom had now risen. The king is in no part of Scripture blamed for this alliance, even in places where it seems unlikely that blame would have been spared had he been considered blameworthy; and as we know that the Egyptians were idolaters, this absence of blame may intimate that Solomon stipulated that the Egyptian princess should abandon the worship of her own gods, and conform to the Jewish law. This at least was what would be required by the law of Moses, which the king was not likely (at least, at this time of his life) to neglect. Nor need we suppose that the royal family of Egypt would make much difficulty in this; for, *except among the Israelites*, the religion of a woman has never in the East been considered of much consequence.

Solomon, soon after, sought by his example to restore the proper order of public worship. At Gibeon was the tabernacle and altar of Moses, and there, notwithstanding the absence of the ark, the symbol of the Divine presence, the Shechinah, still abode. This therefore was, according to the law, the only proper seat of public worship, and the place to which the tribes should resort to render homage to the Great King. Therefore, at one of the religious festivals, the king repaired to Gibeon, accompanied by all his court, the officers of his army, and the chiefs and elders of his people, with a vast multitude of the people. There, in the midst of all the state and ceremony of the holy solemnities, the king presented, to be offered on the brazen altar, a thousand beasts, as a holocaust. This solemn act of homage from the young king was acceptable to God, who, in the following night manifested himself to him in a dream, and promised to satisfy whatever wish he might then form. Instead of expressing the usual desires which animate kings, as well as others, for wealth, and glory, and length of days,—Solomon expressed his sense of the difficulties, to one so young, of the high station to which he had been called; and, humbly conscious of his lack of the experience required to conduct well the affairs of his large empire and numerous people, he prayed for wisdom—nothing but wisdom:—"I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in*. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" This request which Solomon had made was highly pleasing to God. That which he *had* asked was promised to him, in abounding measure—wisdom, such as none before him had ever possessed, or should possess in future times: and since he had made so excellent a choice, that which he *had not* asked should also be given to him—riches and honours beyond all the kings of his time, and, besides this, length of days, if he continued in obedience. Solomon awoke: and feeling within himself that illumination of mind and spirit which assured him that his dream had indeed been oracular and divine, he returned with great joy to Jerusalem.

Soon after this, the discharge of those judicial duties which engage so much of the attention of eastern kings, gave him an opportunity of displaying so much discernment as satisfied the people of his uncommon endowments, and his eminent qualifications for his high place. This was his celebrated judgment between the two harlots who both claimed a living child, and both disclaimed one that had died; in which he discovered the rightful owner of the living child by calling forth that self-denying tenderness which always reigns in a mother's heart†. This produced the very best effect among all the people; for generally nothing is better understood and appreciated, popularly, than an acute and able judicial decision of some difficult point in a case easily understood,

* That is, "I know not how to conduct affairs."
† See the original narrative in 1 Kings iii. 16—28.

and by which the sympathies are much engaged.

The preparations for the temple had from the first engaged the attention of Solomon. Among the first who sent to congratulate him on his succession was Hiram, king of Tyre, who has already been named as an attached friend and ally of David. The value of the friendship offered by this monarch was fully appreciated by Solomon, who returned the embassy with a letter, in which he opened the noble design he entertained, and solicited the same sort of assistance in the furtherance of it, as the same king had rendered to his father David, when building his palace. Hiram assented with great willingness, and performed the required services with such fidelity and zeal, as laid the foundation of a lasting friendship between the kings, and to the formation of other mutually beneficial connections between them. The forests of the Lebanon mountains only could supply the timber required for this great work. Such of these forests as lay nearest the sea were in the possession of the Phœnicians; among whom timber was in such constant demand, that they had acquired great and acknowledged skill in the felling and transportation thereof, and hence it was of much importance that Hiram consented to employ large bodies of men in Lebanon to hew timber, as well as others to perform the service of bringing it down to the sea-side, whence it was to be taken along the coast in floats to the port of Joppa, from which place it could be easily taken across the country to Jerusalem. This portion of the assistance rendered by Hiram was of the utmost value and importance. If he had declined Solomon's proposals, all else that he wanted might have been obtained from Egypt. But that country was so far from being able to supply timber, that it wanted it more than almost any nation.

[Felling trees in Lebanon*.]

* This little cut from the Egyptian antiquities, from a large piece of sculpture representing an invasion of Lebanon by an Egyptian king, represents the mode in which trees were felled *in Lebanon*.

Solomon also desired that Phœnician artificers of all descriptions should be sent to Jerusalem, particularly such as excelled in the arts of design, and in the working of gold, silver, and other metals, as well as precious stones; nor was he insensible of the value and beauty of those scarlet, purple, and other fine dyes, in the preparation and application of which the Tyrians excelled. Men skilled in all these branches of art were largely supplied by Hiram. He sent also a person of his own name, a Tyrian by birth, who seems to have been a second Bezaleel; for his abilities were so great, and his attainments so extensive and various, that he was skilled not only in the working of metals, but in all kinds of works in wood and stone, and even in embroidery, in tapestry, in dyes, and the manufacture of all sorts of fine cloth. And not only this, but his general attainments in art, and his inventive powers, enabled him to devise the means of executing, and to execute, whatever work in art might be proposed to him. This man was a treasure to Solomon, who made him overseer not only of the men whom the king of Tyre now sent, but of his own workmen, and those whom David had formerly engaged and retained in his employment.

In return for all these advantages, Solo-

mon engaged on his part to furnish the king of Tyre yearly with 2500 quarters * of wheat, and 150,000 gallons† of pure olive oil, for his own use; besides furnishing the men employed in Lebanon with the same corn quantities, respectively, of wheat and barley, and the same liquid quantities of wine and oil‡.

Josephus informs us that the correspondence on this subject between Solomon and Hiram, copies of which are given by him as well as in the books of Kings and Chronicles, were in his time still preserved in the archives of Tyre§.

Solomon, who certainly had a strong leaning towards arbitrary power, being still in want of labourers, ventured to raise a levy of 30,000 Israelites, whom he sent to assist the Phœnician timber-cutters in Lebanon,—not all at once, but in alternate bands of 10,000 each, so that each band returned home and rested two months out of three. This relief, and the sacred object of the service, probably prevented the opposition which the king might otherwise have experienced. For the more onerous labour in the quarries, Solomon called out the remnant of the Canaanites, probably with those foreigners (or their sons) who had been brought into the country as prisoners or slaves during the wars of David, who had, indeed, left an enumeration of all of them (adult males) for this very purpose. Their number was 153,600: according to the common custom of the East in such cases, these no doubt laboured in alternate bands, an instance of which has just been given, and as such service is usually required from persons in their condition, when any great public work is in progress, this measure was doubtless considered less arbitrary, and gave occasion to less discontent, than *we*, with our notions, might be disposed to imagine. Of these strangers, 70,000 were appointed to act as porters to the others, and to the Phœnician artisans. They also probably had the heavy duty of transporting to Jerusalem the large stones, which 60,000 more of them were employed in hewing and squaring in the quarries. Of these the stones intended for the foundation were in immense blocks; and, as well as the rest, were probably brought from no great distance, as quarries of very suitable stone are abundant in the neighbourhood. The stones were squared in the quarry, to facilitate their removal. It has been a question how such vast blocks of stone as we see in some ancient buildings were brought to their destination. Satisfaction on this point is afforded by the annexed engraving, which shows how this was managed by the Egyptians, and, doubtless, by the Israelites and others. The string of cattle was prolonged as the weight to be drawn on the sledge required. The remaining 3300 of these strangers were employed as overseers of the rest, and were, in their turn, accountable to superior Israelite officers.

Not only were the stones squared and fitted in the quarry, but the timber was shaped for its use, and every other article fitted and finished before it was brought to Jerusalem; so that, at last, when the edifice began to be reared with the materials thus carefully prepared,—

"No workman's steel, no pond'rous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."—HEBER.

* In the original, 20,000 *corim;* and as the *core* appears to have been about equal to one of our bushels, this gives the result in the text.

† Twenty thousand baths, of seven and a half gallons each.

‡ This explanation of the *separate* quantities to Hiram "for his household," and for the workmen in Lebanon, obviates the apparent discrepancy between the statements in 1 Kings v. 11, and 2 Chron. ii. 10.

§ Antiq. viii. 2, 8.

[Egyptian mode of Transporting Large Stones.]

Three years were spent in these preparations; but, at last, all was ready, and the foundation of this famous temple was laid in the fourth year of Solomon's reign (1027 B.C.), in the second month, and finished in the eleventh year and eighth month, being a space of seven years and six months.

The very great difference between the various plans and views of this temple which different authorities have offered, quite sufficiently intimates the difficulty which has been experienced in connecting together the several descriptive details which the Scriptures afford, in such a manner as to obtain a complete idea of the whole fabric. Warned by the manifest failure of his predecessors, the author of the present work was led to entertain the notion, and to declare it in the 'Pictorial Bible,' that the contemporary architecture of their renowned neighbours, the Egyptians—which we know to have had an extensive influence in much remoter lands—could hardly fail to have operated upon the style and plan of their first and only temple. We therefore suggested, that in an Egyptian temple we were likely to discover a much nearer approximation to the temple at Jerusalem than is now obtainable from any other source. We have since had the very great satisfaction of finding that an architect, Mr. Bardwell, was about the same time led to very similar conclusions. It had been a matter of much regret to us that no regularly-educated architect had turned his attention to the subject; as it must be evident that such a person was more likely than any unprofessional student to combine the architectural details of the Scriptural account, so as to form the collective image which they were intended to exhibit. We shall gratify and instruct our readers by transcribing the whole of this, the only professional estimate of Solomon's Temple which, we believe, has ever been given. We make no alterations, but have added a few explanatory notes where we think Mr. Bardwell has been in error:—

"With so much information before us at the present day, it is almost needless for me to assert that the Temple of Solomon was in the Egyptian style of architecture: a moment's reflection will convince every unbiassed mind that such must have been the case; since, although Greece had been colonised from Egypt nearly 200 years before this, it is not at all likely, from the slow development of human improvement, that the style we call Greek had then superseded its Egyptian parent; and what is conclusive upon this point, as we shall soon see, is, the Temple of Solomon had not, in its proportions and details, anything in common with the temples of Greece. That the Jews had no peculiar style of their own, excepting so far as they were restricted from the use of figures of animals in decoration, is also probable, as, ever since they had settled in Canaan, 400 years previous, they had been constantly engaged in the wars necessary to extend and conserve their newly-acquired territory, and, consequently, had no opportunity of cultivating the fine arts. Besides, Solomon was in constant intercourse with the Pharaoh of his age, and married his daughter (see her portrait in Rosellini, recently discovered). Further, in no part of the world had temple architecture and the art of cutting and polishing stones ever arrived, before or since, to such perfection as in Egypt. The building of the Temple of Solomon, also, was not entered upon hastily; on the contrary, the architect, from the Egyptian colony of Tyre, had sent in his plans to King David years before the building was commenced[?]; these plans that much-honoured man carefully delivered to Solomon, with a schedule of the materials which he had collected for this his ardently-desired work. The architect, therefore, having had plenty of time to perfect his plan, naturally made his design from the best existing examples, the temples of his 'father land.' The Tyrians, being at that time the great common carriers of the world, kept up an extensive commerce with Egypt, I therefore infer from this and the beforementioned reasons, that the masons were Egyptian, and the stone polished granite*, all prepared, fitted, and finished before it was

* It could not be granite, which is not obtainable nearer than the Sinai mountains. It was probably limestone; at least we know not of any other that can be deemed sufficiently accessible for this use.

brought to Jerusalem, since, moreover, there is nothing mentioned about the expensiveness of any article but the stone, 'costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits and stones of eight cubits.'*

"The cella of the temple of Solomon, as described in the first book of Kings, was small, as all those of the Egyptian temples were, of few parts, but those noble and harmonious. It was about the same length, but not so wide, as St. Paul's, Covent Garden: this church is a double square inside, the temple was a treble square; but one square was divided off for the oracle, and geometrical proportions thus established. It was one hundred and sixteen feet three inches long, to which must be added the pronaos, in the same way as that of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, nineteen feet four inches and a half more; giving a total length of one hundred and thirty-five feet seven inches and a half long, by thirty-seven feet six inches broad, and fifty-eight feet one inch and a half high. It was surrounded on three sides by chambers in three stories, each story wider than the one below it, as the walls were narrowed, or made thinner, as they ascended, by sets-off of eleven inches on each side, which received the flooring-joists, 'as no cutting was on any account permitted.' Access to these apartments was given from the right-hand side of the interior of the temple, by a winding staircase of stone, such as may be seen in several of the ancient Nubian temples. A row of loop-hole windows above the chambers gave light to the cella. The oracle was an exact square, of thirty-seven feet six inches, divided from the rest of the temple by a partition of cedar, thirty-seven feet six inches high, in the centre of which was a pair of folding-doors of olive-wood, seven feet six inches wide, very richly carved, with palm-trees and open flowers and cherubim; the floor of the temple was boarded with fir, the roof was flat, covered with gold, upon thick planks of cedar, supported by large cedar beams. The inside walls and the ceiling were lined with cedar, beautifully carved, representing cherubim and palm-trees, clusters of foliage and open flowers, among which the lotus was conspicuous; and the whole interior was overlaid with gold, so that neither wood nor stone was seen, and nothing met the eye but pure gold, either plain as on the floor, or richly chased, and enriched with the gems they had brought from Egypt at the exodus, upon the walls and ceiling. At a little distance from 'the most holy place,' like the railing of a communion-table, were fixed five massive gold candelabra, on each side the entrance, and between the candelabra were chains or wreaths of flowers, wrought in pure gold, separating even the entrance of the oracle from the body of the temple. Within the oracle was set the ancient 'ark of the covenant,' which had preceded them to the Promised Land, beneath two colossal cherubim, each nineteen feet four inches and a half high, with immense outspread wings, one wing of each cherubim touching the other in the middle of the temple, while the other wings touched the wall on each side; before them was the altar of incense, formed of cedar, and entirely overlaid with refined gold; and on the sides of the temple were arranged ten golden tables, five on each side, for the exhibition of the shew-bread, besides other tables of silver, for the display of above one hundred gold vases of various patterns, and the censers, spoons, snuffers, &c., used in the service of the temple. It appears that the inside of the pronaos was also covered with gold; from it a grand pair of folding-doors nine feet four inches and a half wide opened into the temple. These doors were also overlaid with gold, embossed in rich patterns of cherubim, and knops and open flowers; both pairs of doors had ornamented hinges of gold, and before the doors of the oracle hung a veil embroidered with cherubim, in blue and purple and crimson.

"Hiram, the architect (who was also a king)†, had sent over from Tyre his clerk of the works, who superintended the building till it became necessary to set up the two

* "The temple cubit was twenty-three and a half inches, according to Sir Isaac Newton."

† The reader will perceive, throughout this extract, much masonic phraseology, and some historical *facts* for which there is no authority beyond the masonic archives, and that authority men of letters have not yet learned to respect.

great columns of the pronaos; these were of the usual proportions of Egyptian columns, being five and a half diameters high, and as these gave the great characteristic feature to the building, Solomon sent an embassy to fetch the architect from Tyre to superintend the moulding and casting of these columns, which were intended to be of brass; and observe how conspicuous is the idea of the vase (the *bowl* of our translation) rising from a cylinder ornamented with lotus flowers; the bottom of the vase was partly hidden by the flowers, the belly of it was overlaid with network, ornamented by seven wreaths, the Hebrew number of happiness, and beneath the lip of the vase were two rows of *pomegranates*, one hundred in each row; these superb pillars were eight feet diameter, and forty-four feet high, supporting a noble entablature fourteen feet high.

"The temple was surrounded on the north, south, and east, by the inner or priest's court, which had a triple colonnade around it; and before the western front was the great court, square and very spacious, having in the midst the great brazen altar, as wide as the front of the temple itself, viz., thirty-seven feet six inches square; it contained also the magnificent basin, called the 'molten sea,' besides ten other lavatories, all of splendid workmanship in brass, for our architect appears to have a first-rate artist, both in designing and executing, and his materials and talents to have been inadequately rewarded even by the donation of twenty cities. The great court had three propylea, with gates of brass, and was surrounded also with a triple colonnade. Solomon placed his palace, in imitation of the Egyptian kings, adjoining the temple; and like them, also assumed the sacerdotal office, presiding at the consecration of the temple, preaching to the people, and offering the dedicatory prayer. Magnificent must have been the sight, to see the young king, clothed in royalty, officiating as priest before the immense altar*, while the thousands of Levites and priests, on the east side, habited in surplices, with harps, cymbals, and trumpets in their hands, led the eye to the beautiful pillars flanking the doors of the temple, now thrown open and displaying the interior brilliantly lighted up, while the burnished gold of the floor, the ceiling, and the walls, with the precious gems with which they were enriched, reflecting the light on all sides, would completely overwhelm the imagination, were it not excited by the view of the embroidered veil, to consider the yet more awful glories of the most holy place; and astounding must have been the din of the instruments of the four thousand Levites, led on by the priests with one hundred and twenty trumpets, directing the choruses of the immense congregation, as they chanted the sublime compositions of the royal Psalmist in the grand intonations of the Hebrew language, like the 'roaring of many waters.'"†

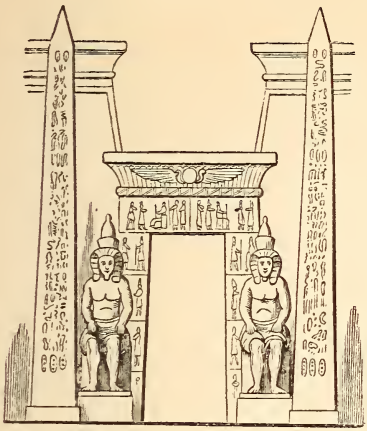
We shall let this stand for a general description of the temple of Solomon, and shall only add a few observations on some points to which we are willing to give more particular notice than Mr. Bardwell has bestowed.

The Egyptian temple, which this writer regards as the most probable model of that of Solomon, is the one at Dandour, engraved in Gau's 'Nubia,' and the frontispiece of which is also given in Maddox's 'Excursions.'

One of the most valuable points in the description, is that in which, from the example offered in these instances, it is determined that the two famous pillars of brass, to which the names of Jachin and Boaz were given, did not stand detached and apart, as most writers have concluded, but were designed for the useful purpose of supporting the entablature of the pronaos. We subscribe entirely to this; although the other alternative, were it correct, might be equally illustrated by a reference to Egyptian temples, as is shown by various instances

* This is very, very wrong. By the part he took, Solomon assumed no priestly functions. Surely Mr. Bardwell must know how zealously the priesthood was guarded from the interference of even kingly pretensions. Signal and immediate visitations—death, paralysis, or leprosy, failed not to follow such assumption of the priestly functions as is here ascribed to Solomon.

† 'Temples, Ancient and Modern." By W. Bardwell, Architect. 1837.

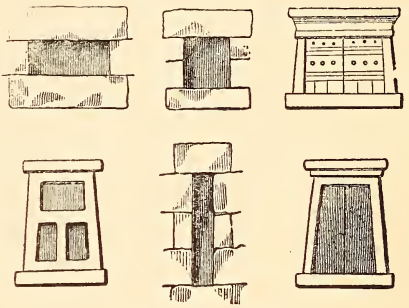


[Obelisks in front of a Temple.]

in which, as in the annexed cut, obelisks are placed immediately in front of temples, at each side of, and at equal distances from the door of entrance.

The DOOR of the temple is particularly mentioned in all its parts—its valves, its sideposts, and its golden "hinges." Our own and other translations of the Bible are unquestionably wrong when they speak of the "hinges" of doors. Doors were not in former times, nor are they now, hung by hinges in the east; they turned on pins, which among the Egyptians were frequently of metal (bronze); several of them have been found and are preserved in various cabinets, and in the British Museum. Such doubtless were the golden "hinges" to the door of Solomon's temple. Sometimes, however, the pin was formed out of projecting ends of the wood which formed the substance of the door. And this is very usual now in the East, where the use of harder woods than the Egyptians possessed renders the metal pins less necessary. The pins turned in holes in the lintel and threshold (or in the floor behind the threshold); and it is now common in the ruins of Palestine and Syria to see these holes in stone lintels and thresholds, in which turned the pins of doors long since destroyed.

It is said that to the temple there were "windows of narrow lights." Or, as the margin of our Bibles renders, it "windows broad within and narrow without, or skewed and closed." The passage is difficult*; and Boothroyd follows Michaelis and Dathe in translating, "windows that might be closed." The annexed specimens of ancient Egyptian windows illustrate all the suggested alternatives. The form of the temple window is doubtless among them; and the others may



[Windows.]

illustrate the different windows mentioned in the Scripture. One of Solomon's subsequent buildings—his country palace, called "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (probably on account of the plantations with which it was surrounded)—had three rows of square windows, in which light was opposite to light, on the different sides of the building†.

As the utensils for the sacred service were similar in design and use to those in the tabernacle of Moses, which have received due attention, it is not necessary to enter into details respecting those which Solomon provided for his temple. It may suffice to mention that, seeing it was designed that the sacred services should be conducted on a larger and more splendid scale than in former times, the instruments of service were proportionately larger, or more splendid, or more numerous. The most remarkable of the new utensils was "the molten sea," which was destined to occupy the place of "the brazen laver" of the old tabernacle. It was cast of fine brass, a hand's breadth

* שקפים אטמים Literally, apertas clausas,—"open shut."

† 1 Kings vii. 4, 5.

thick, and its border was wrought "like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies." It was so large as to contain about 15,000 gallons of water. It was mounted on twelve brazen oxen, which must have given it a very imposing appearance. The instance proves, by the by, as do the figures of cherubim so profusely displayed in all parts of the temple, and the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that the Hebrews were not forbidden to make images of living creatures, so that they were not designed for any idolatrous or superstitious object. Had it been otherwise, nothing could well have been more suspicious and dangerous than the figures of oxen, considering the addiction of the Israelites to the worship of the ox Apis, as evinced by the golden figure of him which they worshipped in the wilderness, and by those which were ultimately set up in Dan and Bethel. Lions, as well as oxen and cherubim, were figured on the base of the smaller lavers which stood in the same (the inner) court of the temple with the large one.

As the priests and Levites were immediately, on the completion of the temple, subjected to the regulations of David, which ever after continued in force,—this is the proper place to take some notice of these rules. Some alterations in previous arrangements would have been very proper even without reference to the temple; for the numbers of the Levites had so increased, and their labours in the Land of Promise had become so light, that it could not be easy for all of them to find occupation in their proper duties.

As a preliminary measure, David had caused the tribe of Levi to be numbered, and it was found to contain 38,000 males above thirty years of age. It seems that he designed their services to commence at that age when he ordered the census to be taken; but afterwards saw occasion to ordain that at least their easier services should commence at twenty. Of the 38,000, David directed that 24,000 should be assigned as assistants to the priests in the service of the temple—not, of course, all at once, but in alternate weekly courses of 1000 each. Of these some of the highest rank had charge of the sacred treasures. Others, apparently of lower rank, attended the priests in all their services at the altar, especially in preparing the victims designed for offerings; and some had special charge of preparing the shew-bread and unleavened cakes, with the proper quantity of flour, for the morning and evening service. "From the text (1 Chron. xxiii. 29), it is inferred that these had in their custody, within the sanctuary, the original standard for weights and measures, liquid and dry. Hence we often read in Scripture of the shekel of the sanctuary,—not that there were two sorts of shekels, one sacred and another civil, as some have supposed, but because weights and measures, being reckoned among the sacred things, were kept in the sanctuary, as they were in the temples of the pagans, and afterwards in Christian churches."*

Of the remaining 14,000, there were 4000 divided into twenty-four courses like the others, appointed to act as porters and guards of the temple. It seems that on this class devolved also the duty of seeing the buildings kept neat and clean.

The same number (4000), similarly divided, were to act as musicians in the temple. This was quite a new part of the service; for previously there had been nothing of music in the Hebrew service, save the occasional blowing of trumpets. We may well believe that this was a matter in which so eminent a musician and poet as David himself took much interest. In fact he had, on a smaller scale, already introduced a musical service at the tabernacle. He not only caused the musical instruments for this service to be made under his own cognisance, but collected and composed the psalms of thanksgiving and of prayer which were to be employed in this part of the temple worship. Part of this service was vocal. With respect to the musical instruments, all the various instruments which were in use among the Hebrews are, on different occasions, named in connection with the services of the temple.

As our attention is limited to the regulations made by David and enforced by So-

* Horne, iii. 273.

lomon, we abstain from any larger notice of the music and psalmody of the Levitical service. In this as in all the other divisions of service, there were some who were chiefs or overseers. The persons of the musical order who, from their superior abilities, had the superintendence of all the others, were Heman and Asaph, of the line of Gershon, and Jeduthun of the line of Merari. Their names often occur in the titles of the Psalms, which were sent to them as composed by David, for the musical service.

The remaining 6000 Levites were distributed throughout the country as judges and genealogists. They also appear to have instructed the people in the Law of Moses, by expounding the several parts of it, in the places where they resided; and that they kept the public records and genealogies of the respective tribes, is generally understood by the Jews.

Doubtless, in apportioning to the Levites their lines of duty, regard was had to their various abilities and attainments. It will be observed that the distribution of this great body into bands, which performed duty in rotation, left by far the greater part of their time free from their proper Levitical duties. We find numerous instances in Scripture that this leisure was much employed in the service of the state. It was indeed obvious and natural, that men of such superior education and attainments, and whose residences were dispersed over the country, should take an influential position in their respective localities, and that they should be much employed as the agents and officers of the general government in their own districts.

The PRIESTS having increased in full proportion to the Levites, were, in like manner, divided into twenty-four classes, each of which officiated a week alternately. Sixteen of these classes were of the family of Eleazar, and eight of the family of Ithamar. They succeeded one another on the Sabbath-day, until they had all attended in their turn. Each class had its own chief or president, whom some writers suppose to be the same as "the chief-priests" so often mentioned in the New Testament, and in the writings of Josephus. For although only four of the classes returned from the Babylonish captivity, these were subdivided into the original number of twenty-four, to which the original names were given. The chief person of each class appointed an entire family to offer the sacrifices, and at the close of their week they all joined together in sacrificing. As each family latterly contained a great number of priests, they drew lots for the different offices which they were to perform*.

The part taken by David and other kings in ordering "the house of God," and even of appointing and deposing the high-priest, might seem very extraordinary at the first view. But it will be recollected that, according to the theory of the constitution, the kings were the specially appointed vicegerents of Jehovah, which necessarily gave them a general power of control superior to any other. It is seen, however, that the regulations which were made rescinded no law of Moses, nor interfered with any positive enactment. But the king, from his position as *vicegerent* of Jehovah, was superior, even in his relation to God, to the high-priest, who was only Jehovah's *minister:* and while the law made no express provision on the subject, it was certainly a matter of policy that the appointment of so important and influential an officer in the state should be retained by the crown. It was obvious, nevertheless, that no high-priest could be legally appointed, but from the family to which that dignity had been originally assigned.

The temple, with all things destined for its service, and every arrangement connected with it, being completed in seven years, its dedication was celebrated the year after, with a magnificence worthy of the object and the occasion. All the chief men in Israel were present—the heads of tribes, and paternal chiefs, together with multitudes of people from all parts of the land. The priests, if not the Levites, also attended in full force, the succession of the courses being *afterwards* to commence. God himself was pleased to manifest his presence and his complacency by two striking miracles:—

At the moment when the ark of the cove-

* This explains Luke i. 9.

nant, having been brought in high procession from its former place in "the city of David," was deposited in the Holy of Holies, the numerous Levitical choirs thundered forth their well-known song,—sent to the heavens by their united voices, and by the harmonious concord of a thousand instruments:—"Praise Jehovah! for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever!"—Suddenly, as at the consecration of the first tabernacle, the house of God was covered with a thick cloud, which filled it, and which enveloped all the assistants in such profound obscurity that the priests were unable to continue their services. This was a manifest symbol that God had accepted this as his house, his palace, and that his Presence had entered to inhabit there. It was so understood by Solomon, whose voice rose amidst the silence which ensued. "Jehovah said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever!" The king stood on a brazen platform which had been erected in front of the altar; and now, turning to the people, he explained the origin and object of this building. After which "he spread forth his hands" towards the heavens to address himself to God. The prayer he offered on this occasion is one of the noblest and most sublime compositions in the Bible. It exhibits the most exalted conceptions of the omnipresence of God, and of his superintending providence; and dwells more especially on his peculiar protection of the Hebrew nation, from the time of its departure from Egypt, and imploring pardon and forgiveness for all their sins and transgressions in the land, and during those ensuing captivities which, in the same prophetic spirit that animated the last address of Moses, he appears to have foreseen. Nothing can be finer than that part of his long and beautiful address, in which, recurring to the idea of *inhabitance*, which had been so forcibly brought before his mind, he cries—"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!"

The king had no sooner concluded his prayer than a fire from the heavens descended upon the altar and consumed the burnt offerings. All the Israelites beheld this prodigy, and bent their faces towards the earth in adoration, and repeated with one voice the praise which was the most acceptable to Him:—"He is good: His mercy endureth for ever!"

By these two signs the sanctuary and the altar received the same acceptance and consecration which had been granted in the wilderness to the tabernacle and the altar there.

After this, the sacrifices were resumed, and countless victims were offered. During two consecutive weeks the people celebrated this great solemnity with unabated zeal. It was the year of jubilee, which had probably been chosen, as a season of general joy and leisure; and hence the unusually great concourse to Jerusalem. In this year the jubilee feast was followed by that of tabernacles, which explains the duration of this great festival, beyond the seven days in which public festivals usually terminated. On the last day of the second feast the king blessed the people, and dismissed them to their homes, to which they repaired, "joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that Jehovah had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people."

Solomon having thus worthily accomplished the obligation imposed upon him by his father, felt himself at liberty to build various sumptuous structures, and undertake various works suited to the honour of his crown and the dignity of his great kingdom. All that can be said with reference to these will be little more than an amplification of his own statement on the subject:—"I raised magnificent works; I built for myself houses; I planted for myself vineyards; I made for myself gardens and groves, and planted in them fruit-trees of every kind; I made also pools of water, to water therewith the growing plantations. I bought men-servants and women-servants, and had servants born in my house; I possessed also herds and flocks in abundance, more than any had before me in Jerusalem; I collected also silver and gold, and precious treasure from kings and

provinces; I procured men-singers and women-singers, and the sweetest instruments of music, the delight of the children of men. Thus I became great, and possessed more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem."*

Of the royal buildings to which allusion is thus made, our more particular information is respecting the palace which the king built for himself, another for "Pharaoh's daughter," and, "the house of the forest of Lebanon." It is difficult, from the brief intimations which the Scriptural history offers, to form a clear or connected idea of these buildings. The description of Josephus, although more precise, does not supply this deficiency; but by its assistance we may make out that the two palaces, for himself and the princess of Egypt, were not separate buildings; but, as the existing arrangements in oriental palaces would suggest distinct parts or wings of the same building. It may assist the matter to understand that an oriental palace consists, for the most part, of a series of open quadrangles, with distinct appropriations, and each surrounded with buildings suitable to its appropriation. In fact, they are distinct buildings, connected only by communicating doors, similar in their general plan to each other, but differing much in size and workmanship. The quadrangle into which the gate of entrance opens, usually contains the state apartments and offices, principally the hall in which the sovereign gives audience, sits in judgment, and transacts all public business. Hence the court is very often called "*the gate*," of which we have a familiar instance in the Ottoman *Porte*, and of which examples are found in Scripture with reference to the courts of the Hebrew, Babylonian, and Persian kings†. Now, from the description of Josephus it would appear that the palace, as a whole, consisted of three quadrangles, of which that in the centre contained the hall of audience and justice, and other state apartments, while that on the right hand formed the king's palace of residence, and that on the left was the palace of the Egyptian princess. The only point on which we are in doubt, is whether the three quadrangles were on a line with each other, or that the one which contained the public halls was in advance of the others; for in this way, equally with the other, the palaces of the king and queen might be respectively described as to the right and left of the public building. There are some who think that "the house of the forest of Lebanon" was the same as this front or public portion of the whole pile; nor should we like absolutely to deny this, although it seems more probable that it was a royal residence in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, deriving its name either from the number of cedar pillars which supported its galleries and halls, or from the plantations by which it was surrounded. These structures were, for the most part, built with immense blocks of squared stones; and the whole was fitted up with cedar; while the nobler rooms and galleries were lined with slabs of costly polished marble to the floor, and were above enriched with sculptures (on the wall), and apparently with paintings (on the plaster), especially towards the ceiling, all of which we may conclude to have been very much in the style of similar things among the Egyptians, whose palaces were decorated after the same style. And if we have rightly interpreted Josephus to intimate that there were three ranges of ornaments in the principal rooms,—polished slabs at the bottom, sculpture above, and painting towards the top, it would be very easy to show how the same ideas and distributions are retained in the palaces of the modern East, where, above basement slabs of *looking-glass*, are wrought recesses, and carvings, and arabesques, and ornaments of stucco (sculpture being interdicted); while towards the ceiling much highly-coloured painting is displayed. If we may credit Josephus, "barbaric pearl and gold" were not wanting among the materials which contributed to the decoration of the more splendid apartments. The historian is at a loss for words to express the full conception, which the traditions of his fathers had conveyed to his mind, of the splendours of Solomon's palatial

* Eccles. ii. 3—9, Boothroyd's version.

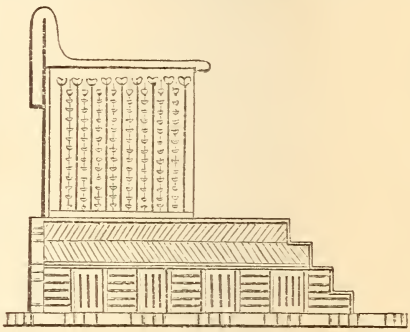
† 2 Sam. xv. 2; Est. ii. 19, 21, iii. 2, 3; Dan. ii. 49. Comp. Matt. xvi. 18; see also Xenop. Cyrop. i. 3; viii. 3.

buildings: "It would be an endless task (he says) to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building; so many courts and other contrivances; such a variety of chambers and offices, great and small; long and large galleries; vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be with costly furniture and gildings; besides, that all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole palace was, in a manner, made up from the base to the coping, of white marble, cedar, gold, and silver, with precious stones here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings." *

As the theory and practice of the government, and, indeed, of most oriental governments, required the king, as supreme magistrate, to be accessible to the complaints of all his subjects, the place in which Solomon administered justice was in the open *porch* of his palace, therefrom called "the porch of judgment." This was an obvious adaptation of the old, and there still (and even now) subsisting practice of making "the gate" the seat of justice. The judgment porch of Solomon's palace we take to have been a large covered apartment, supported by pillars, and entirely open in front. It was seventy-five feet long by forty-five feet broad. Here, upon a raised platform, to which there was an ascent by steps, was placed the *throne* of Solomon, of which so much notice is taken in the Scriptural description and in that of Josephus†; from which, with the help of particulars preserved by early traditions, we collect that to the raised daïs, or platform, on which the throne rested, there was an ascent by six steps. The balustrade (so to speak) of these steps was formed by the figures of couching lions of gold, twelve in all, being two to each step. The throne itself was of *ivory* (a material which appears to have been unknown in Palestine until the time of Solomon), studded and enriched with gold, and over it was a semi-spherical canopy. Besides the twelve lions on the six steps of ascent, there were two as "stays" on each side of the seat, the back of which appears to have been concave.‡

* Antiq. viii. 5. 2. † Ibid. ‡ See 1 Kings x. 18—20.

Now although, for its cost and materials, the like of this throne "had not been made in any kingdom," it is easy to show the correspondence of its general plan and details with those of the *thrones* of the ancient and modern East. The annexed engraving, representing the sort of throne on which gods and kings are most usually seated in the Egyptian sculptures, evinces that the throne, as a raised platform or daïs, was common among that people; and to this daïs was usually an ascent by steps. There is another class of Egyptian seats, which we introduce to the reader's notice, not only on account of the illustration which they



[Throne with steps.]

furnish, but for the sake of the demonstration which they offer of the high pitch to which the arts of domestic civilization had, at a very early date, attained among the next neighbours (and now friends and allies) of the Israelites. They form the first class of seats among that people, and whether we look to the elegance and convenience of their forms, their exquisite workmanship, or the richness of their materials, it is difficult to say in what they are surpassed by modern art. The illustrative points, with reference to the seat of Solomon's throne, are afforded by the lion, and by the concavity of the back,—points which did not escape the notice of Sir J. G. Wilkinson, as cited below. To which we may add that the frames of some of these fauteuils are coloured yellow in the pictures of them in the royal tombs, from which the example is copied, suggesting that they were overlaid with gold, or, at the

[Egyptian Fauteuil *.]

least, gilded. The lions are always, and the other ornamental parts are often, coloured yellow, even when the rest is of a different colour, confirming the probability of the intention to represent gold.

On the walls of the hall in which the throne was placed were probably hung the 300 shields of gold (or probably of wood or hide, covered with gold) which the king caused to be made, and which are mentioned among the proudest treasures of the kingdom. There were 200 other shields, of the same costly material, and twice as large, which were for the use of the royal guard; for, as we shall see presently, the state of the king in his court and in his going forth, was fully commensurate to the magnificence of his palaces.

* Sir J. G. Wilkinson observes with reference to this class of seats, "the back of the chair was equally high and strong. It was occasionally concave, like some Roman chairs, *or the throne of Solomon* (1 Kings x. 19); and in many of the large fauteuils, a lion forms an arm at each side. But the back usually consisted of a single set of upright and cross bars, or of a frame, receding gracefully, and terminating at its summit in a graceful curve, supported from without by perpendicular bars; and over this was thrown a handsome pillow of coloured cotton, painted leather, or gold and silver tissue, like the beds at the feast of Ahasuerus, mentioned in Esther (i. 6); or like the feather cushions covered with stuffs, and embroidered with silk threads of gold, in the palace of Scaurus."—'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. ii. p. 196.

With commendable zeal, Solomon had hastened the completion of the temple; but he allowed nearly twice the time to be consumed on the palatial structures which have engaged our notice. The temple was finished in seven years; but thirteen years were employed on the palaces; so that it was not until the twentieth year that the whole was completed. But for the erection of the temple, all the means had been provided by David; whereas Solomon had himself to provide for his own buildings. And this probably explains the difference; for that, with all his resources, the king's plans outran his means, is evinced by the fact that besides assistance of the same sort which he had rendered towards the building of the temple, the king of Tyre had, by the time the works were completed, advanced to Solomon not less than 120 talents of gold†, in recompense of which the king of Israel assigned to him twenty towns in the vicinity of the Tyrian territory. He seems, however, to have made the mistake of considering that what was good in the eyes of the Hebrews, must be equally good for the Tyrians, who would doubtless much have preferred an extension of their territory along the coast to this comparatively inland and agricultural district. Hiram, when he came to view the ground, saw at once the unsuitableness, and indicated his dissatisfaction by the name of Cabul which he imposed upon it. Solomon, therefore, took back these towns, and doubtless gave the king of Tyre some more satisfying equivalent; for the transaction was very far from interrupting the good understanding between the two kings.

It was doubtless from the considerations arising from his connection with king Hiram, and from narrowly observing the sources of the extraordinary prosperity enjoyed by the Phœnician state, coupled with the want of adequate means for the execution of the magnificent plans which his mind had formed, that Solomon began to turn his own attention to foreign commerce, as a source

† This, at the usual reckoning of sixteen talents of silver to one of gold, which is therefore equal to 6000*l.*, would make 720,000*l.*

of wealth and aggrandisement. We are unacquainted with the particular inducements which Solomon was able to offer to the Phœnicians, who were in this matter proverbially a jealous people, to induce them to afford the benefit of their experience in this enterprise. But it is certain that they furnished the king with ships, such as they employed in their distant voyages westward, and therefore called "ships of Tarshish," and that these ships were manned by Phœnician mariners, and voyaged in company with a fleet of ships belonging to the king of Tyre. That they must have had very cogent reasons for this,—for allowing themselves to be made the instruments of enriching the Hebrew king by traffic with foreign parts—no one who is acquainted with the historical character of that people, or with the commercial character in general, will in the least degree doubt. In seeking the motive by which their proceedings were determined, we must consider the direction of the voyage. In another work* we have exhibited our reasons for concluding that the regions of Tarshish and Ophir lay not in different directions, but were visited in the same voyage; and further that this voyage embraced the southern shores of Arabia, the eastern shores of Africa, and possibly the isle of Ceylon, if not some points in the Indian peninsula. This being the case, we shall perceive that although the Phœnicians had the exclusive command of the *westward* traffic, on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, they could have had no share in this *eastern* traffic but on such terms as Solomon might think proper to impose. For he was in possession of the ports of the Elanitic Gulf, and of the intervening country, whereby he held the key of the Red Sea, and could at his pleasure exclude them from that door of access to the Indian Ocean. It is true that there was another door, by the Gulf of Suez; but its ports were in the hands of the Egyptians, who were by no means likely to allow unobstructed access to it. And then, as to the other channel, across the desert to the Euphrates and Persian Gulf, the key of this also was in the hand of Solomon, by virtue of his military stations on the Euphrates, and his complete command of the desert country west of that river. It may thus appear that since the Phœnicians could have no access to the Indian Ocean but with the consent and by the assistance of the Hebrew king, he was in a condition to stipulate for a profitable partnership in the enterprise. Nor perhaps was he so entirely dependent upon the Phœnicians for the execution of his plans, as might at first sight appear: for although the Israelites knew little of maritime affairs, this was not the case with the Edomites, who were now the subjects of Solomon. They had been accustomed to navigate the Red Sea, and probably to some extent beyond; and although we know not that they reached the shores to which, under the abler guidance of the Phœnicians, the fleets of Solomon penetrated, they probably might have been made, with a little encouragement, the instruments of his designs. In preferring the Phœnicians, Solomon was probably influenced, not only by the knowledge of their greater experience in distant voyages, but by political considerations, which might suggest that he could always control this trade as conducted by the Phœnicians, while to the Edomites, living on the borders of the Elanitic Gulf, it would give such advantages as might in time enable them to engross the whole trade, and to shake off the yoke his father had imposed upon them.

The interest which the king took in the matter, may be judged of from the fact that he went in person to the port of Ezion-geber, at the head of the gulf, to superintend the preparations and to witness the departure of the fleet.

A thirst for knowledge, which is one of the surest evidences of the "wisdom" with which this splendid monarch was gifted, may have had some share in promoting this design; for his agents were instructed, not only to seek wealth, but to bring back specimens of whatever was curious or instructive in the countries to which they came. We know they brought various foreign animals and birds; and since the king took much interest in botany, it is

* 'Pictorial Bible,' Notes on 2 Chron. ix. 10, 21.

more than likely that they also brought the seeds of many plants which had engaged their attention by their use or beauty; and that consequently we may refer to this reign the introduction into Palestine of many plants which had not been known there in former times.

The fleet returned in the third year, laden with the rich and curious treasures of the south and the remote east. There were vast quantities of gold and silver, while the bulk of the cargo was composed of elephants' teeth, and various sorts of valuable woods and precious stones. Nor were the supercargoes which the king sent in the ships unmindful of his peculiar tastes, and probably his special orders, for they took pains to collect examples of the more curious animals, and doubtless other products, of the countries to which they came. Among these, monkeys and peacocks are particularly named—probably from their more singular difference from the forms of animal life with which the Hebrews were previously acquainted.

Without doubt, a large portion of the commodities thus obtained were sold at a great profit. And this explains that while in one place the yearly weight of gold brought to the king, by his ships, is stated at 480 talents, the yearly profit in gold derived both directly and indirectly from these voyages, is counted at the weight of 666 talents*, which according to the lower computation would make not less than 3,646,350*l.*, while a higher scale would make it little short of 4,000,000*l.*

Of the precious woods, Solomon employed a considerable portion in making balustrades for the temple, and in the fabrication of instruments of music. And of the gold, a large quantity was used in making various sorts of golden shields, and the various vessels of the palace. In that palace *all* the vessels were of gold; silver was not seen there: for under the influx of gold as well as of silver, from various sources, the latter metal was much depreciated in value during this splendid reign:—"It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon; . . . . . he made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones." And, in like manner, the rather poor wood of the cedar, which had previously, in the want of large and good timber, acquired a high value, sunk much in estimation, through the large importations of the compact and beautiful eastern timbers, as well as through the profuse supply of cedar-wood itself from Lebanon.

Besides this maritime traffic the caravan trade by land engaged a full share of Solomon's attention. By the possession of a southern frontier stretching across from the Elanitic Gulf to the Mediterranean, the land traffic between Egypt and Syria lay completely at his mercy. He felt this, and through some arrangement with his father-in-law the king of Egypt, he contrived to monopolise it entirely in his own hands. It appears that what Syria chiefly required from Egypt were *linen fabrics* and *yarn*, for the manufacture of which that country had long been celebrated; also *chariots*, the extensive use of which in Egypt has already been pointed out; and *horses*, of which that country possessed a very excellent and superior breed, if we may judge from the numerous fine examples which the paintings and sculptures offer. All this trade Solomon appears to have intercepted and monopolised. He was supplied by contract, at a fixed price, with certain quantities adequate to the supply of the Syrian market, which, after retaining what he required for himself, his factors sold, of course at a high profit, to the different kings of Syria. The price was doubtless arbitrary, and dependent on times and circumstances; but the contract price at which the chariots and horses were supplied by the Egyptians to the Hebrew factors happens to be named,—600 silver shekels† for a chariot, and one-fourth of that sum, or 150 shekels, for a horse.

This was not the only land traffic which engaged the notice of Solomon. His attention was attracted to the extensive and valuable caravan trade which, from very remote ages, coming from the farther east, and the Persian Gulf, proceeded to Egypt, Tyre, and other points on the Mediterranean, by the Euphrates

* Compare 1 Kings ix. 28 with x. 14.

† Or 75*l.*

and across the great Syrian desert. The habitable points of that desert, even to the great river, were now under the dominion of the Hebrew king, and even the Bedouin tribes by whom it was chiefly inhabited were brought under tribute to him, and were kept in order by the dread of his great name. Under these circumstances, Solomon was in nearly as favourable a position for taking a part in this trade as in the land traffic between Egypt and Syria. But the measures which he took were different, and more specially adapted to the circumstances of the case. They were less coercive, and dealt more in the offer of inducements and advantages. And the reason is obvious; for although the ordinary track of the great caravans lay through his territories, it was in the power of its conductors to alter that tract so as to pass northward beyond the limits of his dominion; but this would have produced such expense, trouble and delay, that it would have been preferable to maintain the old route even at the expense of some check and inconvenience. Whether the measures of Solomon were felt to be such we do not know; they were possibly deemed by the caravan merchants and by the Hebrews, as mutually advantageous, although the ultimate purchasers, who could be no parties in this arrangement, possibly regarded them in a different light. The plan of Solomon was to erect in the very heart of the desert an emporium for this important trade. The route of a caravan is so directed as to include as many as possible of the places at which water may be found. At the most important of these stations, where water, and by consequence palm-trees, was found in the most abundance, the Hebrew king built a city and called it Tadmor (*a palm-tree*), whence its Greek name of Palmyra. But Greek and Roman names never fixed themselves in the soil of Syria, and the ruins of the city bear, to this day, among the natives, the primitive name of *Tadmor*. Here the caravans not only found water as before, but every advantage of shelter and rest, while by this establishment Solomon was enabled more effectively to overawe the tribes, and to afford protection to the caravans from the predatory attempts and exactions of the Bedouins. Here the caravan merchants would soon find it convenient to dispose of their commodities, and leave the further distribution of them, to the nations west of the desert, either to the factors of Solomon, or to private merchants,—for we do not know to what extent the king found it advisable to leave this trade free to his own subjects. It may be that private persons among his subjects, or even foreigners from the west, were not prevented from here meeting and dealing with the eastern merchants; but from the general—and with our present lights, we must say short-sighted—policy of Solomon's commercial doings, it may be inferred that he monopolised such advantages in this trade as he deemed safe or prudent. At the least, it must be presumed that he derived considerable revenue, in the way of customs, from such merchandise as did not pass into the hands of his own factors: and this, however advantageous to the king, may have been felt by the caravan merchants but as a reasonable equivalent for the protection they enjoyed, and their freedom from the exactions of the Bedouins. Much of this, which we have stated as probably connected with the foundation of this city of the desert, is not stated in Scripture: but it is deducible from the improbability that, without strong inducements, a city would have been founded in such a situation, and from the detection of these inducements in the commercial enterprises of Solomon, with the illustration applied to the particular instance, which is derivable from the fact that the wealth and glory in which the Palmyra of a later day appears, was due entirely to the circumstance that its position made it an emporium for the caravan trade of the desert. In fact, that it was such at a long subsequent date, and that its very existence depended on its being such, illustrates and justifies that intention in its foundation which, on the strongest circumstantial evidence, we have ventured to ascribe to Solomon.

Besides these branches of commerce, "the traffic of the *spice* merchants" is mentioned*

* 1 Kings x. 15.

among the sources from which wealth accrued to Solomon. In what form this profit was derived is not distinctly intimated. From the analogy of his other operations, we might conclude that he bought up the costly spices and aromatics brought by the spice caravans of southernmost Arabia, which must needs pass through his territories; and that, after deducting what sufficed for the large consumption of his own nation, he sold the residue at an enhanced price to the neighbouring nations. As it is certain that, from his own wants merely, an act of trade must have taken place between him and these caravans, this seems the more obvious conclusion, although, without this, he may have derived an important item of profit from this trade by levying customs upon it in its passage through his dominions.

Such, as far as they can be traced, were the commercial operations of Solomon. It is quite easy *now*, and in a commercial country like our own, to see that these operations were, for the most part, based on wrong views and principles, inasmuch as, however they might tend to the aggrandisement of *the king*, they could confer little solid and enduring benefit on *the nation*. But in the East, where the king is the state, and becomes himself the centre of most public acts, he is seldom found to take interest in commerce, but from regarding it as a source of emolument to the state, by his direct and personal concern therein. The king himself is a trader, with such advantages resulting from his position, as inevitably exclude the private merchant from the field in which he appears. He is inevitably a monopolist; and a sovereign monopoly is, if not an evil, at least not a benefit to the people, whatever wealth it may seem to bring into the country. The river, however noble, gives fertility only to the banks which hem it in; and it is only when its waters are drawn off in their course, and exhausted into a thousand channels, that they bless and glorify the wide country around. Solomon, in his Book of Ecclesiastes, acquaints us with many "vanities" and "sore evils" which he saw "under the sun;" but from this statement we do not learn that he ever became conscious of the very great vanity and most sore evil of a rich king over a poor people, or of the system which makes the king rich while the people remain comparatively poor.

M. Salvador *, in a very interesting chapter on the subject of the Hebrew commerce, appears to approve of the traffic which was opened in this reign with Tyre, Egypt, and Syria; but the distant voyages to Ophir are justly represented by him as standing on a different ground, although the important consideration to which we have adverted escaped his notice. He considers that in this enterprise, the limits which both nature and sound policy had fixed to the Hebrew commerce were, by a most unwise ambition, overpassed. It is not, he remarks, sufficient to imagine or even to execute, great things; it is necessary that they should be suited to times and circumstances, it is necessary to consolidate them. And this was a wisdom which Solomon wanted. The commerce of Israel should have been simply a commerce of commission and transit. The territorial wealth of the country afforded the means of accomplishing this with great advantage. Besides the commercial advantages, the country had numerous outlets for all its agricultural products; and afterwards it enjoyed a good market for foreign products, the transport, which is in general most expensive, being effected almost without real cost by the returning merchants. But instead of confining himself to these obvious sources of profit, Solomon was incited by his vanity, and by the example of the Tyrians, to send forth numerous fleets at a vast cost. The success of these expeditions introduced a disproportionate luxury into Jerusalem, replacing there the rich simplicity of life which had previously characterised the Hebrew nation. A court, organised on the most splendid oriental models,—a vast seraglio, a sumptuous table, officers without number, and hosts of avidious concubines, afflicted a country in which the balance of conditions and property, as established by Moses, ought to have been maintained with the most jealous exactitude.

To this M. Salvador attributes many evils,

* 'Institutions de Moïse,' tome i. ch. vi.

which we shall not anticipate our narrative by repeating here. It will be obvious, however, that whatever evils arose from this traffic, should not, in this fashion, be attributed to the trade itself, or even to the wealth which it brought into the country, but to the mistaken principle on which that trade was conducted, and to the unprofitable absorption into the royal treasury of the wealth which it produced.

Traffic and imposts on traffic, were not, however, the only sources from which Solomon obtained his wealth. Large revenues were derived from the annual tributes of the foreign states, which were now subject to the Hebrew sceptre, or over which it exercised a more or less stringent influence. The kings and princes of such states appear to have sent their tribute in the form of quantities of the principal articles which their country produced, or was able to procure; as did also the governors of the provinces not left under the native princes. Besides the regular tax or tribute derived from countries more or less closely annexed to the Hebrew kingdom, there were more distant states which found it good policy to conciliate the favour of Solomon, or to avert his hostility by annual offerings, which, under the soft name of "presents," formed no contemptible item of the royal revenue. Of that revenue one item is mentioned in rather singular terms:—"All the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his *present*, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses and mules, *a rate year by year*." Here the terms "presents," and "a rate year by year," have a degree of opposition at the first view, which seems to require us to suppose either that those great men who had once resorted to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and to behold the manifestation of it in the ordering of his court and kingdom, not only brought with them the presents which the usages of the East rendered the necessary accompaniments of such visits, but that they continued to send from their several lands yearly gifts of compliments to him. Or else, that the desire of thus complimenting the monarch whom God had so eminently gifted, furnished a decent pretence to those who had other reasons for rendering a real tribute to him. The latter interpretation is that which we prefer. And it is certain that in the case of the only royal visit which is particularly described—that of the Queen of Sheba—only such presents as she brought with her are named, and no "rate year by year" is intimated. Ethiopia was too remote to be within reach of the influences which may have determined the monarchs of nearer nations to make their "presents" to Solomon a yearly payment.

The articles mentioned in the extract just given, together with those named in other places, enable us to form some idea of the display which these annual or occasional renderings of tributes and of traffics must have offered. It has been the fashion of the East to make a show of such offerings by their being taken in procession to the palace of the king by the persons, arrayed in their varied costumes, by whom they were brought to the country. To this custom we have more than once had occasion to allude in the course of the present work. Many were the spectacles of this sort which must have delighted the eyes of the Israelites during the splendid reign of Solomon. There are paintings of Egypt, and sculptures of Persia, which enable us to form some idea of these imposing exhibitions, which indeed are in strict correspondence with those which the courts of the East have still preserved. Of the representations to which we allude, the former is no less interesting and instructive from the details which it offers, than venerable from its high antiquity. It is at Thebes; and represents the ambassadors of four nations bringing their tributes to Thothmes III., whose reign Sir J. G. Wilkinson ascribes to the time of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. It is remarkable that the classes of articles brought by the foreigners are all such as would be included in the classes of products rendered to Solomon. The articles vary with the country and costume of the nation by which they are brought. We see principally gold and silver money in rings; vases and other utensils of the same metal,

of very various and often truly elegant shapes; baskets containing sealed bags, probably of jewels; baskets of fruits, carefully packed and covered with leaves to preserve their freshness; growing plants,—in one instance we see a shrub transported in a growing state: it is enclosed with the mould in which it grows, in a kind of open case, which is carried between two men suspended from a pole, the ends of which rest on their shoulders. Then there are elephants' teeth, and beams of ebony and other valuable woods; and, besides the skins of various animals, particularly leopards, there is a most interesting exhibition of various living animals conducted to the king. Among these are giraffes, various well-distinguished species of apes and monkeys, leopards, and even bears. There were also oxen, of a different breed to that common in the country, as were probably the horses, which also figure in the procession, and which, with chariots, form perhaps the most remarkable objects of the whole, as being brought to a country which itself abounded in horses and chariots; but the horses were probably desirable to the Egyptians as of a foreign breed, and the chariots as a curious foreign manufacture. Upon the whole, a more striking and appropriate illustration of this part of Solomon's glory cannot well be imagined.

The wealth which flowed into the royal treasury from these various sources appears to have been freely disbursed by Solomon in enriching his buildings, in extending their number, and in the ordering of his court and kingdom. Besides the buildings which have already been pointed out, various public structures were built by him in Jerusalem, which city he also enclosed by new walls, fortified with strong towers. Other important towns (as Gaza) were fortified, and new ones built in different parts of the country. Besides Tadmor, which has already engaged our notice, Baalath is named among the towns built by him; and this is supposed by many to be no other than the afterwards celebrated city of Baalbec, in the great valley of Cœle-Syria.

The account which is given of the internal organization of Solomon's kingdom occurs prior even to that which describes the building of the Temple*. But there is reason to think that these arrangements did not, until a later date, assume the completed form in which they are there exhibited. The statement at the first view contains little more than a list of officers. But on closer inspection it will be found that even such a list is suggestive of an orderly arrangement and distribution of functions, as well as of the nature of what was considered public business. If it should be observed that most of these have reference to the supply of the wants of the court and the maintenance of the royal authority, it must be admitted that these are practically the chief objects of oriental governments. However, we shall perceive that in all states such offices make the most conspicuous figure to the eye of the spectator, which, if it penetrates more deeply, may discover that adequate provision is nevertheless made, through the working of some recognised and unostentatious system, and through the ministration of less splendid functionaries, for the well being and the good government of the people. The internal polity of the constitution, as organized by the institutions of Moses, joined to the principles of patriarchal government still at work in the several tribes, might seem adequate to every purpose of internal government. And whatever might be thus left wanting, was supplied by the regulation of David, to which Solomon himself gave effect, appointing Levitical "judges and officers throughout the land."

The list, as given in the sacred narrative, has rather a formal appearance; and in the usual way in which such lists are prepared, begins with the king himself,—"So king Solomon was king over all Israel," and then proceeds to enumerate the officers of his government.

Azariah, the son (or rather grandson) of Zadok the high-priest, and two others, the sons of Sheva, were the SCRIBES. This Sheva, the father, had been sole scribe in the time of David; and that three persons were now required in this office, seems to show either the great increase of business which the

* 1 Kings iv.

arrangements of Solomon threw into this department, or some improved views as to the distribution of labour. These appear to have been the royal secretaries, through whom all the king's more formal commands were issued, and who registered all public acts and decrees *.

The office of RECORDER was occupied under Solomon by Jehoshaphat the son of the person (Ahilud) who had held it in the time of David. The marginal renderings in our Bibles, "a remembrancer, *or* a writer of chronicles," help to convey a notion of this office. The only difficulty is in drawing the line clearly between the functions of the recorder and those of the scribes. But his functions appear to have been of a less temporary nature than theirs; it being rather his business to give the form of permanent records or chronicles to the occurrences of his time, particularly such as related to the king and court. In oriental courts this was an office of great trust and importance. The records formed by these officers in the Hebrew court, probably furnished the materials from which the Books of Kings and Chronicles were compiled; and the two books of the latter perhaps exhibit nearly the form of the original documents †.

The office of CAPTAIN OF THE HOST has been brought historically under our notice in sufficient prominence to render any separate statement unnecessary.

THE KING'S FRIEND, OR COMPANION, seems to have been very nearly what we understand by the term *Favourite*, as distinguished from the responsible chief minister. From the connection in which it occurs, it seems that this person was admitted to the peculiar intimacy of the king, was in all his secrets, and conversed familiarly with him. Sometimes a person holding no public office enjoyed these privileges; but we at other times find it associated with some important office in the state. So it was under Solomon, whose *own Friend*, Zabud, a son of the prophet Nathan, was also "the chief officer," which appears to point him out as what we call the prime minister. Hushai, without any such office, was "the king's friend," in the time of David; and very worthily did he support that character. In later times the term came to be used in a more general sense, as applied to any one employed to execute the royal commands, or holding a high office in the state ‡.

THE PRIME MINISTER, as we should call him, appears to be the person who is described in Scripture as "*next* (or, literally, *second*) *to the king*." Solomon had no officer *thus* indicated; but, as we have just intimated, Zabud appears to have enjoyed the office. This was the office which the excellent Jonathan was willing to occupy under David—"Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be *next unto thee*;" § but which in that reign would appear to have been really filled by one or more of the king's own sons; for it is said, "The sons of David were chief about the king." ‖ This office was of the highest antiquity in the different eastern courts; Joseph filled it in the court of Egypt, and Haman in that of Persia ¶.

THE ROYAL COUNSELLORS are persons of whom we possess but slight information. They appear to have been persons of great experience, of which the king found it expedient to avail himself on occasions of importance. The most marked instances are those in which Absalom called the council to consult about the measures to be taken against David; when the young prince implicitly followed the course which seemed the best to his council. It is clear that David had such a council, as some of the counsellors are named. But that Solomon had one, does not appear till after his death, when his weak and headstrong son consulted "the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived;" but fatally rejected their discreet council, and preferred that of his own self-willed contemporaries. Of course the king took counsel with the officers of state respecting the matters con-

* See 2 Sam. viii. 17, xx. 25; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18, 37; Isa. xxxvi. 3.

† See 2 Sam. viii. 16, xx. 24; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18, 37; 2 Chron. xviii. 15; Isa. xxxvi. 3; Est. iii. 12, vi. 1, x. 2. Comp. Herodot. vi. 100, vii. 9, viii. 90.

‡ 2 Sam. xv. 37, xvi. 16; 1 Kings iv. 5; 1 Macc. x. 63, xi. 26, 27.

§ 1 Sam. xxiii. 17.

‖ 1 Chron. xviii. 17.

¶ Gen. xli. 40, 43; Est. iii. 1. See also 2 Chron. xxviii. 7.

nected with their several offices; but on matters of general policy, the council appears to have been consulted; and such of the counsellors whose names occur in the history did not hold any administrative office in the state. In the time of David, Ahithophel was one; Hushai, *the king's friend*, another; and Jonathan, David's uncle, appears to have been a third *.

An eastern king never takes any step without consulting an astrologer, who is supposed to have the means of ascertaining the result of the proposed actions, or at least to know the propitious moments for their commencement. In ancient times kings sought to learn the will of heaven not only through astrologers, but through priests, augurs, and diviners. This example was followed by the ill-disposed and idolatrous Hebrew kings; but the faithful vicegerents of Jehovah were heedful to consult one of his PROPHETS on every occasion of importance, that through him they might learn whether the course which they had in view was acceptable to the Great King. To Him this reference and becoming acknowledgment that his sovereignty was *a reality*, was highly acceptable. Indeed, the Lord was not unmindful to enforce his own rights as the true political head of the Hebrew state, by directing his prophets to give his orders or his counsel to those kings who were so unmindful of their true position as to neglect to seek for either. Under the monarchy, therefore, the prophet occupied the important position of agent for communicating to the human king the orders, and making known to him the will, of the King Jehovah, his political superior in the Hebrew state, to whom he owed allegiance, and whom he was bound by the very tenure of his office to obey. It is remarkable that, under the monarchy, there is no instance after the reign of Saul, in which the will of Jehovah was made known by Urim and by Thummim, as in former times. It will be seen that, in this point of view, the *Prophet* was in fact a functionary of very high political importance in the Hebrew state.

* 2 Sam. xvi. 15—23, xvii.; 1 Kings xii. 6; 1 Chron. xxvii. 32, 33; Isa. iii. 3, xix. 11, 12; Jer. xxvi. 11.

The person who was "*over the tribute*" appears to have been over those who collected all taxes and tributes, whether from the native Israelites, or from subjected states; and who received the amount and consigned it to the treasure-chambers of the king. It would thus appear that his office answered in some degree to that of our Chancellor of the Exchequer. The same person, Adoram, was over the tribute, in the reigns both of David and Solomon †.

The names of the MANAGERS OF THE CROWN PROPERTY do not occur in the list of Solomon's officers; but we find them in the time of David, as they were doubtless preserved in that of his son, who had, in fact, more need of them. The list is valuable and interesting, as it affords information concerning what may be called the private property of the crown, as distinguished from the revenues of the state. It is as follows:—"Over the king's treasures was Azmaveth, the son of Adiel: and over the storehouses, in the fields, in the cities, in the villages, and in the castles, was Jehonathan, the son of Uzziah. And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground, was Ezri, the son of Chelub. And over the vineyards was Shimei, the Ramathite: over the increase of the vineyards, for the wine cellars, was Zabdi, the Shiphmite. And over the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees that were in the low plains, was Baal-hanan, the Gederite; and over the cellars of oil was Joash. And over the herds that fed in Sharon, was Shitrai, the Sharonite; and over the herds that were in the valleys, was Shaphat, the son of Adlai. Over the camels also was Obil, an Ishmaelite (a Bedouin); and over the asses was Jehdeiah, the Meronothite. And over the flocks was Jaziz, the Hagerite (an Arab). All these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's." ‡

Here we have the indication of sources of revenue with which we should not otherwise have been acquainted. As to the flocks, besides this statement, the reader may refer to 1 Sam. xxi. 7; 2 Sam. xiii. 23; by which

† 2 Sam. xx. 24; 1 Kings iv. 6.
‡ 1 Chron. xxvii. 25—31.

it will appear that there was such a property early in the reign of Saul; and that, under David, the sons of the king had possessions of this nature. There are so many obvious ways by which such a property might be formed, without interference with any known right or principle, that no inquiry on the subject is necessary. Michaelis collects from the passage we have quoted, that, as both king and subjects had the right of pasture in the Arabian deserts, David kept numerous herds there, which were partly under the care of Arabian herdsmen.

Another branch of property here indicated offers a subject of inquiry of far greater interest. It is obvious that even as early as David's reign, there was an extensive and valuable property in land attached to the crown, consisting of arable lands, vineyards, plantations of the olive and sycamore, &c. And the question is, how such a possession could be collected in a country where the land was strictly entailed upon the descendants of the original possessors, and could not, in perpetuity, be sold. How this law might be infringed, it is unnecessary to indicate; but it is of importance to see that a royal demesne might be formed without any interference with its operation. In the first place, there was land in the hands of the descendants of the Canaanites, which had not been included in the original distributions of the soil as made by Joshua, and which might be acquired by purchase from the owners. In fact, the site of the temple was thus purchased by David from Araunah the Jebusite. It also appears that, in practice, although we apprehend that the strict principle of the law would scarcely justify it, the lands of persons executed for offences against the state were estreated to the crown: and this, as the only means by which the king could, with any show of legal pretence, acquire property already in the hands of an Israelite, led to grievous injustice and oppression on the part of unscrupulous kings. Then, again, in the East, waste uncultivated lands are considered to belong to no one in particular. They are called "God's lands," and become the particular property of the persons who first bring them into cultivation. Now, the superior command of capital and labour enjoyed by the kings, must have given them peculiar advantages in forming a demesne from this source; and, considering how they were restricted in other respects, we cannot suppose they were backward in availing themselves of this advantage. It appears that the lands belonging to the crown were, for the most part, cultivated by bondsmen, and perhaps also by the people of conquered countries*. Yet it also seems that the royal vineyards, &c., were in some instances rented out to tenants, by whom they were cultivated, and who rendered to the proprietor, as for rent, a certain proportion of the produce, or its estimated value in money†.

Seeing that all these offices existed in the time of David, and they comprehend nearly all those that are mentioned in the time of Solomon, much, if not all, of the credit of that organization of the kingdom which these offices imply, may be ascribed rather to the father than the son, although it may be more convenient to view the whole in the completed form which the kingly administration took in the reign of the latter. There are, however, a few new offices which are mentioned in the reign of Solomon. One is that of GOVERNOR OF THE PALACE, whose office appears to be similar to that of the *stewards* employed by rich men to superintend their affairs. He had charge of the servants, and indeed of everything that pertained to the palace‡. From the passage in Isa. xxii. 22, which contains a promise of investiture in this office, it has with reason been inferred that this functionary wore a peculiar and distinctive dress, bound with a precious girdle, and that he carried on his shoulder a richly-ornamented key. With reference to this last inference, which is deduced from—"the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder," it should perhaps only be considered to suggest that a key was the ensign of his office.

Another body of officers was introduced into the state by Solomon, which we may

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. † Sol. Song viii. 11.

‡ 1 Kings iv. 6, xviii. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18; 2 Chron. xxviii. 7; Isa. xxii. 15, xxxvi. 3, xxxvii. 2, *et seq.*

readily believe to have been far from popular in the nation. They were twelve in number, with a president, who was Azariah, a son of the prophet Nathan. These twelve were appointed to preside over the collections of provisions in as many districts, into which the land of Israel was divided. Every one was charged with the duty of collecting in his district, within the year, provisions enough to support the court for one month, following each other in rotation. It appears likely that the produce thus collected formed the kingly *tenth*, the exaction of which had been foretold by Samuel, and of which the present seems the first intimation. The comparative simplicity of the court of Saul, and the great spoil obtained by David in his wars, without any corresponding expenditure, had probably rendered this imposition previously unnecessary. We have already explained why this imposition must have been felt in a peculiar degree onerous to the Hebrew people, on the ground that they *already* paid the sovereign tithe to the true king of the Hebrew nation, JEHOVAH. And although they had been forewarned that this additional charge upon them would follow as a necessary consequence of their unauthorized choice of a human king, we may be sure that the first to impose it would greatly compromise his popularity with the people. That Solomon actually did so—that he imposed upon the people unaccustomed burdens, which they felt to be very grievous—are facts which we know, and seem to point to him as the one who first demanded the obnoxious tenth, which, as we have intimated, was probably paid in the form of the produce which these twelve officers were appointed to collect. The "store cities," and granaries which Solomon is said to have erected in different parts of the country, were doubtless the places in each district to which the produce of that district was brought, and in which it was deposited until required for the use of the court. Supplying the court with provisions merely, might seem to the English reader no very heavy task to a nation. But a different notion will be formed by reference to the large numbers of persons who are fed from what may be considered as the provision supplied to an eastern court. Vast numbers of persons, who acted in some capacity or other as the servants of the numerous officers of the king; the officers and servants of the great personages who were constantly visiting the court of Solomon, and the numerous servants of those officers and royal servants; the harem, which alone contained a thousand women, with a great number of servants and eunuchs; and probably the rations of the royal guards and of all dependent upon them:—all were to be supplied from the court, being considered as members or guests of the royal household. This explains the prodigious quantities of victuals which were *daily* required for the use of the court, of which the account is—"Solomon's provision for one day was thirty cores (750 bushels) of fine flour, and threescore cores (1500 bushels) of meal; ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl."*

As a matter of form and arrangement for a specific purpose, there was much to admire in the orderly supply of provisions to the court; and it was probably not less this than the vast quantities brought in and consumed, together with the manner in which it was prepared and distributed, which engaged the admiring notice of the Queen of Sheba, although the arrangements connected with the dignified attendance and the splendid display at Solomon's own table is mentioned as the chief matter of her wonder.

We doubt that the charge of supplying the extravagant consumption of the court was the only burden which Solomon ventured to impose on the Israelites. There are indications that there was also a tax in money; but whether to complete the kingly *tenth*, or as additional thereto, it may not be easy to determine. The reason for this conclusion is chiefly that this provision for the court is not called a "tribute" or "tax," and was managed by distinct officers under a distinct chief from any other. And yet it appears that a tribute was collected from the people by the separate officer who was

* 1 Kings iv. 22, 23.

"over the tribute." One of the first transactions of the succeeding reign put this beyond a doubt.

And besides this, it would seem that the people had the charge of supporting the numerous *horses* kept by Solomon. Unmindful of the law by which the kings were expressly forbidden "to multiply horses unto themselves," Solomon formed a numerous body of cavalry. He had 1400 chariots, which, being Egyptian chariots, doubtless had two horses to each; and not fewer than 12,000 horsemen. A portion of these he kept in Jerusalem, and the rest were distributed through the land in what were called from this circumstance, the "chariot-cities." This distribution was doubtless made for the purpose of equally distributing the charge of their subsistence.

With respect to the chariots, these being Egyptian, we are at no loss respecting their appearance and furniture. But it is remarkable that, although it is unquestionable that there was a mounted cavalry in Egypt, and

[Egyptian on Horseback.]

that Solomon's "horsemen" were mounted on trained Egyptian horses, there is but one representation of a man on horseback in the whole range of the sculptured and painted antiquities of that country. From its extreme curiousness, a copy of this is now introduced. Doubtless, the horsemen, distributed in separate bodies throughout the country, took their rotations of service at Jerusalem, where it appears to have been their immediate duty to act as a sort of life-guard to the king in excursions and journeys. Josephus reckons up the horses of Solomon as 20,000, and says that they were the most beautiful in their appearance and the most remarkable for their swiftness that could anywhere be seen; and that, to preserve these qualities, they were kept in constant and careful exercise. The riders were in their appearance quite worthy of their horses. They were young men in the beauty and flower of their age, and the tallest in stature that could be found in the country. Their undress was of Tyrian purple; and their long hair, which hung in loose tresses, glittered with golden dust with which, every day, they sprinkled their heads. But when they attended the king they were in complete armour, and had their bows ready strung. Often, in the fine season, the king rode down to his beautiful gardens at Etham, six miles from Jerusalem, attended by these young men. On such occasions he rode loftily in his chariot, arrayed in white robes*.

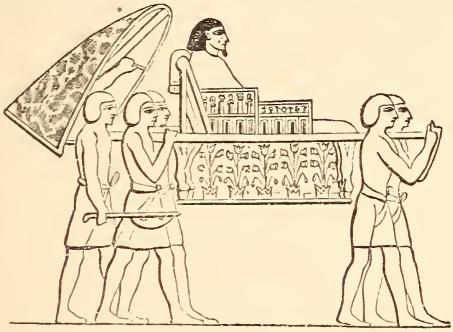
But we have a still better description of the manner of the king's excursions, from the pen of Solomon himself, in his renowned Song of Songs. His bride is represented sitting in her kiosk, and looking towards the quarter in which the royal gardens lay; and takes notice of an appearance concerning which she inquires of her virgins:—

"*Bride.*—What is this that cometh from the wilderness,
Like clouds of smoke perfumed with myrrh,
With incense, and all the powders of the merchant?
Virgins.—Behold, this is the *palanquin* of Solomon.
Three-score valiant men are about it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
They all bear swords, being expert in war;
Each bears his sword on his thigh,
On account of the perils of the night.
King Solomon hath made for himself
This *couch* of the wood of Lebanon.
Its pillars hath he made of silver,
Its bases of gold, its cushions of purple.

* Antiq. viii. 7. 3.

The middle of it is spread with love*
By the daughters of Jerusalem."†

This is a very clear description of a splendid palanquin or litter, and shows that this conveyance was then in use among great people, as it was in Egypt, and is still, in one form or another, throughout the East. The form of the palanquin usually employed in ancient Egypt is shown in the annexed engraving; and, seeing how the luxuries and refinements of Egypt were now adopted in Palestine, with the evidence before us that the palanquin had come into use, this was doubtless one of the forms in which it



was used. But Harmer, in his illustrations of Solomon's Song, thinks that the description would suggest a comparison to the *howdah*, in which, on the back of an elephant, the princes of India are wont to ride in state. Nevertheless, seeing that elephants were not in use in Western Asia for this purpose, and that it is only barely possible that Solomon should have had any of these noble creatures—we should rather suppose that he availed himself of the similar and much easier conveyance used still in those parts of Asia which do not possess the elephant. This is a litter, shaped something like the howdah, but generally longer, to afford the rider the advantage of reclining at his ease. It is generally closed except the front, or partly open on one or both sides but often it has only curtains, more or less rich, which may be drawn as the rider wishes. This is not carried on the back of any animal, but is borne, after the manner of a sedan-chair or an ordinary palanquin, between two camels or mules, and, from its stately and often splendid appearance, has the Persia : name of *takht ravan*, or "moving throne."

In this attempt to convey some notion of the royal establishments, the wealth, the state, and the pomp of Solomon's court, which, on an inferior scale, formed the model to subsequent Hebrew kings, it is necessary that some notice of his harem should be taken.

The women of the king's harem are to be considered as making a part of his retinue or equipage, since, generally speaking, they were merely designed to augment the pomp which belonged to his character and his situation. The multiplication of women in the character of wives and concubines was, indeed, forbidden in the strongest manner by the law of Moses‡; but Solomon, and, though in a less extent, several other Hebrew kings, paid little heed to this admonition, and too readily and wickedly exposed themselves to the dangers which Moses had anticipated as the result of pursuing the course which he had interdicted.

The kings willingly submitted to any expense which might be deemed necessary in ornamenting the persons of their women, and of the eunuchs (the black ones especially) who guarded them. It may be remarked here that eunuchs were brought at a great expense from foreign countries, inasmuch as the mutilation of men was contrary to the

* That is, spread with cushions wrought in the most elegant manner, and ornamented with flowers.

† Sol. Song iii. 6—11.

‡ Deut. xvii. 17.

Mosaic law*. The women of the harem were considered as concubines (or secondary wives) to the king. But the successor to the throne, although he came into possession of the harem, was not at liberty to have any intercourse with the members of it.

Although the king had unlimited power over the harem, yet the wife who was chiefly in favour, and, as we have already seen, more especially the king's own mother, had great authority and weight in political matters. Hence in the books of Kings and Chronicles the mother of the king is everywhere spoken of as one of the royal counsellors†.

The women in the harem of Solomon were not fewer than one thousand, of whom the Scripture counts seven hundred as wives and three hundred as concubines. This distinction may be taken as illustrated by Solomon's own classification at a time when he was younger, and his harem was less extensive, than in the later day to which the present statement refers:—"In my palace are threescore *queens*, and fourscore *concubines*, and *virgins* without number."‡ Here by *queens* we are probably to understand those of noble parentage, who at the celebration of their nuptials brought ample dowries with them; by *concubines* those who were selected on account of their personal charms, and were married without dowries; and by *virgins* those who were also procured (perhaps purchased) by the royal purveyors on account of their beauty, and who were in waiting to be introduced to the royal notice. With the number of these Solomon himself does not appear to have been acquainted. The same distribution doubtless applies to the larger number which now engages our notice.

That a large proportion of the whole were foreigners and idolaters, is certain. The chief and favoured wife was undoubtedly the king of Egypt's daughter. She is so spoken of both in the Scripture and by Josephus. This lady is generally believed to be the bride in the Canticles. Of this there appears to us to be very little doubt. But were it otherwise, this bride was unquestionably a principal and distinguished wife; and from this source some information may be collected respecting the manners and state of the harem, and the position, privileges, and attendance of the favoured wife.

That among the first class of wives there was *one* distinguished above the others, and who was called, pre-eminently, *the Queen*, is evinced not only by this, but by other passages of Scripture. But the ground of this distinction is not clearly intimated; and, instead of inquiring the particular ground of this distinction, it is better to understand that the ground was various and fluctuating. Our apprehension is, that the first wife married with a dowry was the one who, as a mere matter of right, was considered entitled to this honour, unless she were superseded in it by another dowried wife giving birth to an heir to the crown; or unless the king subsequently obtained a wife so exalted in birth, that her father was entitled to expect and demand the first place for his daughter. Here are three grounds of preference, of which the mere personal liking of the monarch is not one. For the whole history and romance of the East attests that the chief wife could maintain her position, even when some other woman was more the object of the sovereign attention and regard; and that in fact the great current jealousy of the harem is that between the "sultaness" and the "favourite." But, indeed, neither in the Bible nor elsewhere does the king ever appear to think of the possibility of *deposing* the one who has become the chief wife, to promote the favourite to her place, though he might raise her to that highest station if a vacancy occurred. The queen could only be deposed for some strong crime or offence. Thus Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, made Maachah queen on declaring her son heir to the throne; but she was afterwards deposed (by her grandson) on account of her idolatries§: and in Persia queen Vashti was deposed, by the advice of the royal council, on account of her dis-

* For proof of the employment of eunuchs in the harems of the Hebrew kings, see 1 Kings xxii. 9; 2 Kings. viii. 6, ix. 32, 33, xx. 18, xxiii. 11; Jer. xxxviii. 7, xxxix. 16, xli. 16.

† See Jahn, sect. 236.

‡ Sol. Song vi. 8.

§ 2 Chron. xi. 21, 22, xv. 16.

obedience. We never read of a queen being deposed merely because the king liked another better.

It appears, throughout the Canticles, that this principal wife was attended, with much respect, by a considerable number of maidens; and as the attendance on the other wives of the first class was doubtless in proportion, although not equal, it may be that the number of females in the harem greatly exceeded the "thousand wives and concubines." In fact, these attendants formed, most probably, the "virgins without number," in even the early state of Solomon's harem; for it is usual for the inferior members of an oriental harem to wait upon each other* and upon the superior ladies.

The dress of the queen (for by that high title we had better, to avoid circumlocution, call the principal wife) was very splendid; but it does not clearly appear whether its splendour was distinctive, or was such in its fashion as any one of wealth and high rank might exhibit. The raiment was of cloth of gold and costly needlework†, and particular attention was paid to her head-tire. In the Canticles the king exclaims,—

"Beautiful are thy brows with rows of jewels,
And thy neck with strings of pearls!
Yet rows of gold we will make for thee,
Together with studs of silver."—
Sol. Song i. 10, 11.

The first line intimates that the ornament of rows of jewels on the head, still much affected by ladies in the East, was thus early in use, while the two last lines exhibit an intention to provide for her a head-ornament which, although of humbler materials (gold and silver, but perhaps set with jewels), was more honourably distinctive in its character. This was doubtless her *crown;* for that the principal wife was distinguished by a crown in the Hebrew court, as she was in that of Persia‡, we learn from the prophet Jeremiah§.

* In a certain number of them the duty of attendance is taken by each in rotation.

† Psalm xlv. 9, 13, 14.

‡ Est. ii. 17.

§ "Say unto the king *and to the queen*, Humble yourselves, sit ye down: for he will cause to fall from your head *the diadem* of your glory." Jer. xiii. 18. Blayney's version.

The other intimations concerning the queen's condition which may be collected from the Canticles are slight, but instructive to those who can detect the inner character of things and circumstances through, and by means of, the forms in which they are presented to the view.

The only passage of Scripture in which a woman is mentioned as eating in company with a man, is that in which the queen is represented as present at a garden banquet, with the king and a few of his intimates. This, however, was not a regular meal or public feast, but a sort of refection, as appears from the articles named. The king says,—

"I am come into my garden, my spouse;
I gather my myrrh with my spice;
I eat my honeycomb with my honey;
I drink my wine with my milk.
Eat, O my friends, O drink!
Yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved!"—
Sol. Song v. 1.

From the frequent mention of valuable perfumes, it may appear that the queen was distinguished by the cost of those which were profusely lavished on her person; and that, at least within the harem, she was served and attended with considerable state, very constantly appears. We shall be excused for mentioning one small circumstance, on account of the illustration it enables us to offer of the antiquity of a luxury, or rather comfort, which, in our northern climates, is of very modern use. This is the *umbrella*. Its very ancient use in Egypt is shown by the cut at p. 316, in which an attendant bears an umbrella of peculiar form behind the palanquin of his lord. There it had become a private convenience, whereas in other oriental countries it appears to have been, as it still is, an appurtenance of the kingly state. In the sculptures of Persia it is found as being borne by an attendant over the head of the king, and is of a shape not remarkably different from that which it now bears. Harmer‖ ingeniously conjectures that the passage in the Psalms (cxxi. 5)—"The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy

‖ "Observations," vol. ii. p. 441.

[Umbrella.—From Persepolis.]

shade on thy right hand: the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night," —alludes to and indicates the ancient use of the umbrella in Palestine. It appears to us that, by an easy transition of ideas, there is a similar allusion in the Song of Songs, where the queen says,—"His banner over me was love."* At all events, this instrument being probably in use in Palestine, it will, from the customs of the East, as illustrated in the annexed engraving, appear that the umbrella, or a canopied adaptation of it, borne over her head, was one of the distinctions to which the queen, especially a daughter of the king of Egypt, might aspire.

We have dwelt on these small matters in this place, because no equally fitting opportunity for introducing them will hereafter occur, while they include too much illustration of the state of society, and of manners and ideas in a remote age and country, to be altogether overlooked. With respect to the harem in particular, we are glad to have said all we need say on a subject so humbling and so painful: for it is both, to contemplate a system under which a vast multitude of reasoning and feeling beings, who might be the blessed wives and mothers of a thousand homes, are brought together, as mere objects of state or appetite, and their lives utterly wasted to gratify the lust or ostentation of a single man. In the case of Solomon, the system brought its fatal retribution, which will presently be noticed as a matter of history. But there was another retribution, resulting from the natural reaction of this system, which has less been noticed; and this was the debasement of his own moral sense, as exemplified in the loss of the power of appreciating the many true and beautiful things which are found in the character of woman. The man is very greatly to be pitied who could say—"Behold, this have I found, ... counting one by one to find out the reason; which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one [*wise* or *good*] man among a thousand I have found, *but a woman among all those have I not found.*"* The definite number, corresponding with that of his wives and concubines, sufficiently intimates that *they* afforded him the experience from which he speaks, and from which he is evidently disposed to infer the general character of the sex. But a man much less wise than Solomon may discover "the reason" which eluded his research. He had placed both them and himself in a false position:—*them*, by bringing them into a condition, and under the operation of a system, which might seem as if ingeniously contrived for the very purpose of precluding the development and exercise of the peculiar energies and virtues for which woman, in her true place, is distinguished; and *himself*, by rendering it impossible that he should ever witness those true feelings and small nobilities of character, which, even in this position, she might manifest among her own companions, although they expand only to perfection and bear good fruit under the genial warmth of domestic life.

King Solomon was unquestionably wise: but, from this and other matters, we may suspect the practical character of his wisdom —may doubt whether it were not rather "the wisdom of words," or of ideas, or even of knowledge, than that wisdom of conduct, or, more properly, wisdom manifested in conduct, which is worth more than all.

* Sol. Song ii. 4.

† Eccles. vii. 27, 28.

But—aware of the imputations to which his conduct had laid him open, and how little he might seem to thoughtful men to have honoured the precious gifts which God had given to him—he has been careful to leave his own apology on record*. In this he exhibits himself as testing all the "vanities" of life to realise the *practical* conviction of their emptiness, and to rest the more assuredly in the conclusion that wisdom is the only real good for man under the sun. He alleges that all this while his wisdom remained with him; by which he must mean his general intellectual wisdom, particularly as enabling him to detect the unsatisfying nature of all the vanities of life. But whether it were the part of a wise man to consume his energies and time in such experiments on life; and whether the resulting conviction to himself could counterbalance the grievous and irremediable wrong which these experiments inflicted on others,—are questions which do not engage his notice.

The view which we take,—that the proverbial wisdom of Solomon had nothing to do with his moral character or perceptions; and that, although he *possessed* the most wisdom, he was not in his *use* of it the wisest of men, appears to be precisely that which the Scriptural narrative intended to convey. Nor is the world without other eminent instances in which vast attainments, and a strength and grasp of intellect before which the most hidden things of physical and moral nature lay open and bare, have been united with much weakness of heart and great deficiency in the moral sense. This view does not therefore in the least degree interfere with the conviction that—"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart†, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore..... For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom."‡

Among these, there is one whose visit is more particularly mentioned than any other. This was the Queen of Sheba. And the distinguished notice which her visit has obtained is probably on account of the greater distance from which she came, and the greater glory which therefrom redounded to Solomon, the fame of whose wisdom brought her, with royal offerings, from her far distant land. That land is supposed to have been Abyssinia; and as the fleets of Solomon, which passed through the Red Sea, may, with the greatest probability, be presumed to have touched and traded at the eastern ports of Africa, it is easy to see through what channels she might have heard of the glory and wisdom of the Hebrew king. She came with a very great and splendid retinue; and in her train were camels laden with spices, gold, and precious stones. In her interviews with Solomon she "proved him with hard questions,"—a mode of testing "wisdom" which was common in that age, and which, indeed, every one who made unusual pretensions to knowledge and sagacity was understood to invite. Solomon was familiar with this exercise, for doubtless other illustrious visitors had tried his wisdom in the same manner; and Josephus expressly says that before this there had been much passing of "hard questions" to and fro between him and Hiram king of Tyre. He readily solved all the difficulties which the royal stranger proposed; and we are told that, "When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up

* In the book of Ecclesiastes; the only book in the canonical Scriptures which lays claim to a *philosophical* character.

† *We* should say *head* or *intellect*. The Hebrews made the *heart* the seat of intellect, and the *bowels* the seat of feeling.

‡ 1 Kings iv. 29—34.

unto the house of Jehovah, there was no more spirit in her, and she said to the king, 'It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine own eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men! happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be Jehovah thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel."*

Being now satisfied, the queen presented Solomon with the precious things she had brought with her. The gold alone was not less than one hundred and twenty talents†, and with respect to the spices, it is remarked that "there came no more such abundance of spices as those which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon." Suitable returns were made by him; and the queen returned to her own country. The native annals of Abyssinia not only claim this princess for their queen, but ascribe to this visit the very important consequence of the introduction of Judaism into that country. And it is certainly worthy of notice that to inquire into the Jewish religion, no less than to witness the wisdom and greatness of Solomon, seems to be stated as the object of her journey, for it is said that it was in consequence of her having "heard of the fame of Solomon, *concerning the name of Jehovah*," that this journey was undertaken.

The glory of Solomon's reign was grievously dimmed towards its conclusion. It will be observed that he had not only transgressed the law by "multiplying wives unto himself," but had taken a considerable proportion of them from the neighbouring idolatrous and adverse nations, with whom the Israelites generally had been interdicted from contracting any alliance, on the ground that such connections might turn their hearts to idols. The case of Solomon evinced in the strongest manner the wisdom and foresight of this interdiction; for even he, in the doating attachment of his latter days to the "fair idolatresses" in his harem, not only tolerated the public exercise of their idolatrous worship, but himself erected high places for the worship of Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians; of Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and of Molech, the abominable idol of the Ammonites, on the hills opposite to and overlooking that splendid temple which he had commenced his reign by building to Jehovah. The contrast of these two acts, at the opposite extremities of his reign, offers as striking a "vanity" as any of those on which he expatiates in his book. In the end, his fall was rendered complete by his own participation, by the act of sacrifice, in the worship of these idols. This great and astonishing offence is, with sufficient probability, reckoned by Abulfaragi to have taken place about the thirty-fourth year of Solomon's reign, and the fifty-fourth of his age. By this fall he forfeited the benefits and privileges which had been promised on the condition of his obedience and rectitude. It was not long before the doom which he had so weakly and wilfully incurred was made known to him. This was that the kingdom should be *rent* from him and given to his servant. Nevertheless, in judgment remembering mercy, the Lord said that this great evil should not occur during his time, but under his son. This was for David's sake; and, for his sake also, who had derived so much satisfaction from the promised perpetuity of his race in the throne, his house should still reign over one tribe, that of Judah, with which Benjamin had now coalesced. How this intimation was received by Solomon, and what effect it produced upon him, we are not told.

Soon after, the same intimation was conveyed to an able and spirited young Ephraimite, named Jeroboam. This person had so much distinguished himself by his diligence and ability in an inferior employment as to attract the notice of the king, who promoted him to the high and responsible office of intendant of the imposts levied from the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. At the time when his duties in the provinces required him to leave Jerusalem, a prophet named Abijah met him in the way, and, seizing the new mantle which he wore, *rent*

* 1 Kings x. 4—9.

† Worth 720,000*l*.

it into twelve pieces, of which he gave to him ten. This significant action he then proceeded to explain, in correspondence with the intimation which had been given to Solomon. The new mantle of the kingdom was to be rent after the death of the king, when only two parts, or tribes, should remain to the house of David, and Jehovah would give the other ten to Jeroboam, and confirm the dominion to his race if it continued in obedience. The mind of Jeroboam was well suited to grasp the prospect thus opened to him. But it appears that he allowed the communication to transpire; for it came to the ears of Solomon, who then sought to intercept the appointment by putting him to death. But he had timely warning and fled to Shishak, the king of Egypt, who protected him; and there he remained until Solomon died.

Egypt had long before afforded refuge to two persons, who now, in their own countries, occasioned much trouble to Solomon, and more afterwards to his successor. The first of these was Hadad, of the royal family of Edom. He was a little boy when that country was conquered for David by Joab; and some faithful adherents then contrived to escape with him to Egypt, where Pharaoh gave him a house, appointed a regular provision for his household, and bestowed lands upon him; and when he grew up bestowed upon him in marriage the sister of the queen, by whom he had a son, who was brought up among the sons of the Egyptian king. But ease and honours could not divert Hadad from the remembrance of his native land, his lost kingdom, and the slaughter of all his house. Burning with high purposes of ambition and vengeance, and of restoring the independence of Edom, he sought, and with considerable difficulty obtained, permission of Pharaoh to return to his own country. The attempts which he then made to recover his kingdom occasioned considerable trouble in the latter part of Solomon's reign; but the strong garrisons which David had left in Edom, and which Solomon maintained there, prevented them from being successful. When his case appeared hopeless in this quarter he went, with such as he could persuade to follow his fortunes, and joined himself to Rezin, who had already occasioned considerable disturbance to Solomon's power in Syria. This Rezin had been a commander under Hadadrezer, that king of Zobah whom David overthrew. It seems that he had drawn off the force under his command, and directed it to the pursuit of his own ambitious projects. At first he led with his men that wild life of predatory warfare, of which there are so many examples in the Bible history of ancient times; but he gradually acquired a settled power over a portion of Syria, and ultimately established a kingdom, of which Damascus was the capital; and this, of course, he could not do but at some loss and disadvantage to Solomon, especially by interrupting the communications with Tadmor.

From this person Hadad and his adherents experienced a good reception, and obtained assistance in establishing themselves in another and neighbouring portion of Syria. And when Rezin died, Hadad (by what means or on what grounds we know not) obtained possession of his dominions also, thus becoming the virtual founder of that important kingdom of Damascene-Syria in which, in future years, the Hebrew nation often found a persevering and formidable opponent. Hadad was for his kingly qualities so much honoured by his successors, that his name became a very common one among them, if, indeed, it were not made an official one, like that of Pharaoh in Egypt. The histories of Hadad and Rezin, and the parts which they took, severally or conjointly, in the foundation of the kingdom of Damascene-Syria, is involved in much obscurity and doubt, amidst which the account which has been now given seems the best that can be gathered from the circumstances on record.

Whether Solomon ultimately repented of his offences, and was reconciled to God, is a question which is involved in some doubt. If he did repent, it is a matter of surprise that there is not the least intimation of so interesting and important a circumstance, either in the books of Kings and Chronicles, or in Josephus. That also none of the

punishments of his crime were averted has been used as an argument against his repentance: but to this we are not disposed to allow much weight, for if the repentance of David for his acts of adultery and murder did not avert the punishments denounced against him, how much less might we expect it to do so in the case of idolatry—which was, in fact, treason against the King Jehovah—a *public* crime committed by a person whose example, both from his high station and his character for wisdom, was calculated to have the most dangerous effect,—while that station and character rendered it pre-eminently his duty to set the contrary example of fidelity to the Great King. We therefore conclude that, whatever benefit repentance might have brought to his own soul, we are not to suppose that it would have averted the public punishment of a public crime. If a man commits a murder and repents, his repentance creates the hope of future benefit to his own soul: but, in this world, his punishment from the law is the same as if he had not repented.

Nevertheless, it has been charitably concluded that Solomon did repent; and this conclusion is founded on the book of Ecclesiastes, which is supposed to have been written after that repentance. Yet whoever looks at that book dispassionately will see little to support that conclusion. There appears to us nothing in those views of life and of the dispensations of Providence which it contains, which might not have occurred to his sagacious mind before as well as after his offence. All the *experience* to which he therein refers, we *know* to have been obtainable by him *before* his fall; while it is equally true that the book itself contains not the slightest allusion to his offence, or even to idolatry in general, although that "vanity of vanities" is the one to which he must have been the most acutely sensible, had he been in the supposed state of repentance when that book was written. The result is, that this appears to be a question on which we have no evidence on either side, and on which it is therefore best not to form *any* opinion.

Solomon died in the year 990 B.C., after he had reigned forty years and lived about sixty. With all his glory he was but little lamented by his subjects, for reasons which will now be obvious to the reader. Indeed, a great part of the nation may appear to have regarded his death with a secret satisfaction, on account of the prospect which it offered of a release from the heavy imposts which the king had fonnd it necessary to inflict for the support of his costly establishments. The more the splendour of Solomon's reign is considered, the more its illusive and insubstantial character will appear, whether we inquire for its effect upon the real welfare of the nation, or even upon the permanent grandeur of the crown. Its utter disproportion to the permanent means and resources of the state is strikingly and sufficiently evinced by the fact that, so far from any of his successors supporting or restoring the magnificence of his court, the quantities of gold which he had lavished upon his various works and utensils gradually disappeared, to the last fragment, and served but as a treasure on which succeeding kings drew until it was entirely exhausted.

Of the children of Solomon history has only preserved the name of one son, Rehoboam, his destined successor, and one daughter named Taphath*. Rehoboam was the son of an Ammonitish mother, and being born the year before his father's accession to the throne, was of course upwards of forty years of age when that father died.

The effects of the arbitrary policy and inordinate expense which had prevailed in the court of Solomon during the last years of his reign, began to appear as soon as his death was announced. The rulers of the tribes assembled at the city of Shechem, in the tribe of Ephraim,—which tribe, it will be remembered, was always disposed to regard with strong jealousy the superiority of Judah. Here they wished to enter into a new stipulation with the heir to the throne—a precaution which had been neglected under the excitement and extraordinary circumstances which attended the accession of Solomon. If Rehoboam had been wise, the

* 1 Kings iv. 11.

place which had been chosen for this congress, and the presence of Jeroboam,—who had hastened from Egypt when he heard of Solomon's death, and took a prominent part in the present matter,—were circumstances which, among others, might have apprised him that the occasion was one of no ordinary moment, and required the most careful and skilful management. Rehoboam was not equal to this crisis; for when the rulers demanded, as the condition of their submission, that he should abrogate a portion of the burdens which his father had imposed upon them, he failed to discern what might be gained by a ready and cheerful concession, and required three days on which to deliberate on their demand. In this time he decided to reject the counsel of the older and more prudent counsellors, who enforced the necessity of compliance with this demand, and chose rather to adopt the advice of the young and headstrong courtiers—warm advocates of the royal prerogative—who exhorted him to overawe the remonstrants by his majesty, and to drive them back like yelping dogs to their kennels. Accordingly, when the three days had expired, his fatal and foolish answer was, that his little finger should be heavier upon the nation than his father's loins; and that whereas his father had only chastised them with whips, he would chastise them with scorpions. Nothing could more clearly than this answer evince the unfitness of Rehoboam for the crisis which had now occurred, and his utter ignorance of the spirit which was in Israel: while it at the same time indicates the arbitrary notions of the royal prerogative which he found occasion to imbibe during the later years of his father's reign.

On receiving this answer ten of the tribes instantly renounced their allegiance to the house of David, and chose Jeroboam for their king. Two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin, alone adhered to Rehoboam—Judah had the good reason that the family of David was of their tribe; and both these tribes were advantaged by the presence of the metropolis on their respective borders, and had necessarily derived peculiar benefits from that profuse expenditure of the late king of which the other tribes had cause to complain.

Thus was the great and powerful empire which David had erected, and which Solomon had ruled, already divided into two very unequal parts. Jeroboam had ten of the tribes, and his dominion extended over the tributary nations eastward, towards the Euphrates; while Rehoboam only retained the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which are henceforth, from their strict identity of interest, to be regarded as one tribe, under the name of Judah. To this division belonged also the subject territories of Philistia and Edom. But, notwithstanding the more than equal figure which this kingdom makes in the further history of the Hebrew nation, it may be well to bear in mind that what is henceforth to be called the kingdom of Judah, ruled by the house of David, formed not above a fourth part of the dominions of Solomon.

Rehoboam was not disposed to submit quietly to this proceeding. At first, affecting to suppose that his authority over the ten tribes would still be recognised, he sent, at the usual season, the officer who was "over the tribute" to collect the taxes which had been exacted in the last years of his father's reign. But the people rose, and testified their indignation and defiance by stoning this obnoxious personage to death. On this Rehoboam resolved to attempt to reduce the revolted tribes to his obedience by force of arms, and collected a large army for that purpose. But when the prophet Shemaiah announced to him the Lord's command to relinquish this enterprise, he manifested some sense of his true position by disbanding his army. This it must be allowed was a signal example of submission, and may intimate that when thus reminded of it he became sensible of the propriety of the requisition. No definite treaty of peace was, however, concluded, and the frontiers of the two kingdoms continued to present an hostile aspect.

CHAPTER IV.

ISRAEL, FROM 990 B.C. TO 931 B.C.

THE period which occupies the remaining chapters of the present book "has been hitherto considered as the Gordian knot of Sacred Chronology; the intricacy of which all the chronologers have complained of, but none have been able to unravel. The difficulty of harmonizing the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel together has principally arisen; 1, from the discordance in some of the correspondences in the years of their respective reigns, with the direct lengths of those reigns; and, 2, from not critically determining the duration of the two interregnums, or vacancies, in the succession of the latter kings, so as to make them correspond with the former throughout."*

All this has been adjusted and harmonized by Dr. Hales in the following Table, on data which he has fully explained in his 'Analysis:'—

KINGS OF JUDAH.				KINGS OF ISRAEL.			
	Names.	Years.	B.C.		Names.	Years.	B.C.
1	Rehoboam	17	990	1	Jeroboam	22	990
2	Abijah	3	973	2	Nadab	2	968
3	Asa	41	970	3	Baasha . . . . . (24)	23	966
4	Jehoshaphat	25	929	4	Elah . . . . . (2)	1	943
5	Jehoram or Joram . . .	8	904	5	Zimri and Omri . . (12)	11	942
6	Ahaziah	1	896	6	Ahab	22	931
7	Queen Athaliah	6	895	7	Ahaziah	2	909
8	Joash or Jehoash	40	889	8	Jehoram or Joram . . .	12	907
9	Amaziah	29	849	9	Jehu	28	895
	Interregnum	11	820	10	Jehoahaz	17	867
10	Uzziah or Azariah . . .	52	809	11	Jehoash or Joash	16	850
11	Jotham	16	757	12	Jeroboam II.	41	834
12	Ahaz	16	741		First Interregnum . . .	22	793
13	Hezekiah	29	725	13	Zechariah and Shallum .	1	771
14	Manasseh	55	696	14	Menahem	10	770
15	Amon	2	641	15	Pekahiah	2	760
16	Josiah	31	639	16	Pekah	20	758
17	Jehoahaz, three months .				Second Interregnum . .	10	738
18	Jehoiakim	11	608	17	Hoshea	9	728
19	Jehoiachin, three months .						
20	Zedekiah	11	597		Samaria taken	271	719
	Jerusalem taken	404	586				

In the preceding history we have seen that Jehovah, from the time of Moses to the death of Solomon, always governed the Hebrews according to the promises and threatenings which he delivered from Mount Horeb. If they deviated from the principle of worshipping Jehovah as the only true God, that is, if they revolted from their lawful king, he brought them, by suitable chastisements, to reflect on their obligations, to return to Jehovah, and again to keep sacred the fundamental law of their church and state. The same course we shall find pursued in the government of the two kingdoms. If the monarchs of both had viewed

* Hales, vol. ii. p. 372.

the late great revolution, the sundering of the empire, as a consequence of the idolatrous and unlawful practices of Solomon's court, as a warning (for such it really was) to them not to break the fundamental law of the state, but to govern their subjects according to the law, and to treat them as the subjects of Jehovah; then both kingdoms might have enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity. Even Jeroboam, though he had received no promise of an eternal kingdom, as David had, yet the assurance was given him that, if he obeyed the law as David did, the throne should long continue in his family*. But as the kings of both kingdoms often disregarded the fundamental laws of the commonwealth—by idolatry rebelled against their divine sovereign, carried their disorders so far, and treated their subjects in such a manner, that they are aptly described by Isaiah and Ezekiel† under the image of wicked shepherds—there arose a succession of prophets, who, by impressive declarations and symbolic actions, reminded both rulers and subjects of their duties to Jehovah, and threatened them with punishment in case of disobedience.

Even the rebellious backslidings from God which more particularly distinguished the kingdom of Israel did not prevent Jehovah from governing the kingdom according to his law. We shall see in the sequel how he exterminated one after another those royal families who not only retained the arbitrary institutions of Jeroboam, and tolerated and patronised idolatry with its concomitant vices, but even introduced and protected it by their royal authority. The extermination of the reigning family he announced beforehand by a prophet, and appointed his successor. We shall see that the higher their corruptions rose, so much the more decisive and striking were the declarations and signs made to show the Israelites that the Lord of the universe was their Lord and King, and that all idols were as nothing when opposed to him. Even Naaman, the Syrian, acknowledged, and the Syrians generally found to their sorrow, that the God of the Hebrews was not a mere national god, but that his power extended over all nations. The history represents a contest between Jehovah, who ought to be acknowledged as God, and the idolatrous Israelites; and everything is ordered to preserve the authority of Jehovah in their minds. At last, after all milder punishments had proved fruitless, these rebellions were followed by the destruction of the kingdom, and the captivity of the people, which had been predicted by Moses, and afterwards by Ahijah, Hosea, Amos, and other prophets‡.

We shall also find that the divine Providence was favourable or adverse to the kingdom of Judah, according as the people obeyed or transgressed the law; only here the royal family remained unchanged, according to the promise given to David. We shall here meet indeed with many idolatrous and rebellious kings, but they were always succeeded by those of purer mind, who put a stop to idolatry, re-established theocracy in the hearts of their subjects, and, by the aid of prophets, priests, and Levites, and the services of the temple, restored the knowledge and worship of God. Judah, therefore, although much smaller than Israel, continued her national existence 134 years longer; but at last, as no durable reformation was produced, she experienced the same fate as her sister kingdom, in fulfilment of the predictions of Moses and several other prophets.

The following account of the two kingdoms, therefore, should be viewed as that of a real theocracy; and thus, as a continued execution of the determination of God, that the true religion should be preserved on the earth. In this view it certainly deserves our most attentive study §.

Shechem, being one of the most important towns in his own tribe of Ephraim, was made by Jeroboam the metropolis of the new kingdom. He had also a summer residence at Tirzah, in the tribe of Manasseh, which,

* 1 Kings xi. 37, 38, xii. 21—24; 2 Chron. xi. 1—4, xii. 15.

† Isa. lvi. 9; Ezek. xxxiv.

‡ Deut. xxviii. 36; 1 Kings xiv. 15; Hosea ix.; Amos v.

§ The above following the table, is adopted, with some abridgment, from Jahn, book v. sect. 35.

therefore, seems in the history to share the metropolitan dignity with Shechem.

The new king, little regarding the unconditional promises which had been made to him, applied himself to such operations of human policy as might tend to establish his kingdom, and confirm its separation from that of Judah. Viewing them as measures of policy in the abstract, the praise of much political sagacity and foresight need not be denied to their author; and it is certain that they were successful in promoting the object he had in view. But they were, in his peculiar position, as a king in Israel—that is, a vicegerent of Jehovah, not only improper, but in the highest degree criminal; for they involved an interference with matters far above the prerogative of Jehovah's vassal, and the abrogation of institutions which the Supreme King had established as essential to the good government and subordination of *His* kingdom, with the introduction of other institutions of a nature abhorrent to the Mosaic law, and of a tendency against which that law had most jealously guarded the people. Jeroboam is therefore to be regarded not as, gratuitously and from abstract preference of evil, leading the people into wrong courses; but as being careless whether the course he took were good or evil, so that it tended, in his judgment, to the security of his kingdom; for he had failed to learn that hard truth—that implicit obedience to the behests of his Almighty superior, not tortuous courses of political expediency, offered the true security of his peculiar kingdom.

Jeroboam was much annoyed at the obligation which the law imposed, of the resort of all the Israelites three times a year to Jerusalem. He clearly perceived that this concourse and frequent meeting of all the tribes at the same place, and for the same object, was a strong uniting circumstance among them; and he feared that the continuance of this usage might ultimately tend to the re-union of the severed kingdoms under the house of David. Undoubtedly it was an awkward circumstance that the subjects of one king should be obliged thus often to resort to the metropolis of a neighbouring and unfriendly monarch; and still more, that his own kingdom should be drained of a considerable portion of its wealth for the support of a service which was exclusively confined to the now adverse metropolis, and for the maintenance of priests and Levites whose services were rendered at Jerusalem, in the presence and under the authority of the rival sovereign. This was a state of things for which, it must be allowed, Jeroboam was under strong and natural inducements to seek a remedy. His *duty* was to have trusted that God, who had promised to continue his kingdom if he were obedient, and who had, indeed, already interposed his authority to prevent Rehoboam from warring against him, would provide a remedy for these difficulties, or take measures to prevent the consequences which he apprehended. But Jeroboam wanted that trust in God which it behoved the vassal of Jehovah to exhibit; and he applied himself to devise measures of his own to meet these exigencies. The measures which he took were so bold and decisive, that they at once took root, and became in their development so interwoven with the political constitution of the country, that even the more pious successors of this king in the throne of Israel did not venture to abolish them or re-establish the authority of the fundamental law.

Under the pretence that Jerusalem was too distant for the resort of his subjects, he established two places of resort at the opposite extremities of his kingdom, the one in the north, at Dan, and the other in the south, at Bethel. Both of these places, it will be remembered, had been previously places of public resort—Bethel as a place of sacred stones, and Dan on account of the ephod and teraphim which the Danites had reft from Micah and established in that place. Then, to give this resort an object, he established at these places golden or gilded calves, in unquestionable imitation of the Apis and Mnevis of the Egyptians, among whom he had spent the years of his exile. We are not at all to suppose that he intended to introduce the worship of other gods. These images were doubtless intended as symbols of Jehovah; and the worship rendered before

them was held to be in his honour. But, on account of the danger of idolatry, the use of all such symbols had been interdicted by the fundamental law of the state: and the use in particular of this very symbol of a golden calf, to which, from Egyptian contaminations, the Israelites were (as Jeroboam must have known) more attached than to any other, had in former times brought signal punishment upon the Hebrews in the wilderness. It was, then, not the worship of other gods, but the worship of the true God in an irregular, dangerous, and interdicted manner, which constituted the crime of Jeroboam, who "sinned and made Israel to sin."

Nor did the irregularities end here. Jeroboam made his system a complete one. He not only changed the *place* of concourse to the people, but also altered the *time*, directing that all the festivals should be observed a month later than the law commanded, an alteration by which considerable confusion must have been at first produced, as the law had appointed these festivals with a reference to the seasons of the year. For this new worship, temples and altars were erected at Dan and Bethel and to its support the tithes and other sacerdotal dues accruing within the ten tribes were directed: thus at once cutting off the greater part of the income of the establishment of Jerusalem. It is probable that this wealth might still have been retained by the Levites whose cities were within the limits of the kingdom, and by such of the Aaronic priests as might have chosen to conform to the new order of things. But, to the eternal honour of this much calumniated body, they all refused to sanction these proceedings, or to take any part in such violation of the Divine law; in consequence of which they not only forfeited the dues which had afforded them subsistence in the ten tribes, but found it prudent and necessary to abandon also the cities which belonged to them in those tribes, and withdraw into the kingdom of Judah. There they were cheerfully received, although the two tribes forming that kingdom thus became burdened with the whole charge which had hitherto been shared among twelve tribes. This fact is very valuable, as showing that the Levitical tribe had conciliated and was entitled to, the esteem and respect of the people. In the end many persons belonging to the other tribes, who disapproved of Jeroboam's innovations, and were disposed to maintain their own fidelity to the spirit of the Mosaical institutions, followed the example of the Levites, and withdrew into the kingdom of Judah. It is not necessary to point out how seriously these migrations lessened the true strength of Jeroboam's kingdom and increased that of his rival.

Jeroboam was thus left to establish a new priesthood for his new worship. Priests were accordingly appointed from all the tribes indiscriminately; but, as to the important office of high-priest, his prudence and ambition suggested its annexation to the crown, as was the case in Egypt and some other heathen countries.

Jehovah was not slow in manifesting his displeasure at these proceedings. At one of the periodical feasts (that of Tabernacles), the time for which had been a
Jeroboam was discharging th
of offering incense on the a
when a prophet of God fr
on the spot, and denounced d
this altar, to be executed by a future king of Judah, Josiah by name; and in proof of his mission, announced that it should even now receive such a crack that its ashes should be scattered abroad. Hearing this, the king stretched forth his hand to seize the prophet, when his arm stiffened in the act, and could not be again drawn back, until the prophet himself interceded with God for him. At the same time the altar was rent, and the ashes strewed abroad, as the prophet had said.

This message seems to have produced no good effect either on the king or the people; and this may have been partly owing to the misconduct of the prophet himself; for after having publicly declared that he was forbidden to eat or drink in Bethel, or to make any stay there, he allowed himself, after having departed, to be imposed upon and brought back, and to be feasted in Bethel, by a sort of Balaamite prophet; for which he was slain by a lion on his return home, and

his body was brought back and buried in Bethel. As the prophet had thus acted against his own avowed orders, and had in consequence been destroyed with manifest marks of the Divine displeasure, the occasion was doubtless taken to diminish the credit and effect of the mission with which he had been charged.

Jeroboam lived to see three kings upon the throne of Judah. There arose a skirmishing warfare between the two kingdoms in the latter years of Rehoboam; and in the reign of his successor the war was brought to a great pitched battle, the result of which was adverse to Jeroboam. In the latter years of his reign the prophet Ahijah, who had originally communicated the Divine appointment to him, was commissioned to denounce the death of his most hopeful son, Abijah, about whose sickness the wife of Jeroboam went to consult him in disguise. The prophet, though blind with age, knew her by the prophetic impulse which came upon him; and he not only told her this, but declared the approaching destruction of Jeroboam's race by a succeeding king of Israel; and also announced the ultimate captivity of the tribes of Israel beyond the Euphrates for their manifold iniquities.

Jeroboam himself died in the year 968 B.C., after a reign of twenty-two years.

His son Nadab ascended the throne in the second year of Asa, king of Judah. He reigned two years, during which he adhered to the system of his father, and at the end of which an intimate of his own, named Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar, conspired against him and slew him as he was laying siege to Gibbethon, a fortress which the Philistines retained in their possession. According to the policy of the East, Baasha having slain the head of the house of Jeroboam, hastened to destroy all its other members, who might prove disturbers of his safety in the throne. Thus was the denunciation of the prophet Ahijah against the house of Jeroboam speedily accomplished.

The government of Baasha proved not only offensive to God but oppressive to the people, on both which grounds great numbers of the subjects of this kingdom sought repose in that of Judah. It was probably partly in consequence of the alarm which this constant migration of his people produced, that Baasha entered into a skirmishing warfare with Asa king of Judah, and ultimately laid siege to and took the town of Ramah, seven miles to the north of Jerusalem, which he began to rebuild and fortify, with the view of leaving a garrison in it to check the communication with Jerusalem, and to become a point from which excursions might be made into the kingdom of Judah. This bold proceeding occasioned much alarm in Judah; but, instead of opposing it by force of arms, king Asa collected all the gold he could find in his own treasury, *and that of the temple*, and sent it to Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, to induce him to make a diversion in his favour. Accordingly the Syrians fell upon the north of Israel, and took all the fenced cities of Naphtali; which obliged Baasha to relinquish his enterprise in the south, and march to the defence of his own territories.

Time only confirmed Baasha in the evil courses which had proved the ruin of the house of Jeroboam; in consequence of which a prophet, named Jehu, the son of another prophet called Hanani, was sent to declare for his house the same doom which he had himself been the agent of inflicting upon that of Jeroboam.

Baasha died in 943 B.C. after a reign of twenty-three years.

After the death of Baasha, Israel became the prey of a series of sanguinary revolutions. His son Elah remained only two years on the throne, at the expiration of which he was assassinated during a feast by one of his generals, of the name of Zimri, who then assumed the crown. Zimri, during the few days of his reign, found time to extirpate the whole family of his predecessor, thus accomplishing upon the house of Baasha the doom which the prophet had declared.

The army, which was engaged against the Philistines, no sooner heard of the murder of their king than they declared in favour of Omri, their own commander, and proclaimed him king. This new king immediately marched with all his forces against his rival,

and used such diligence that he shut him up in the summer capital of Tirzah. Zimri made no resistance, but fled to his harem, which he set on fire, and perished in the flames. He had reigned only seven days; and this signal and speedy end gave occasion to the proverb in Israel, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?"

Omri had another competitor: for while the army had elected him, a portion of the people, equally disgusted at the deed of Zimri, had made Tibni king. The kingdom was thus split into factions, and it was only after a civil war of six years that the faction of Omri prevailed, and Tibni was put to death. Omri reigned above five years after this. He was more guilty before God than any of his predecessors, for he appears to have taken measures to turn into actual idolatry that which under the former kings had only been an irregular and interdicted form of worship and service. Finding some disadvantages in the situation of Tirzah, however pleasant, for a metropolis, Omri purchased a hill of a person called Samar for two talents of silver (750*l.*), and built thereon a city, which, after the name of the previous owner of the site, he called SAMARIA, and made it the capital of his dominion. So well was the situation chosen, that the city remained the metropolis of the kingdom while the kingdom endured, and was still a place of importance when the Hebrews ceased the second time to be a nation. There are some respects in which its site is deemed by travellers preferable to that of Jerusalem.

After his reign of eleven completed years, counted as twelve in the Scriptures, because he had entered on the twelfth, Omri died in the year 931, B.C., being the thirty-ninth year of Asa king of Judah.

CONTEMPORARY KINGS.

KINGS OF ISRAEL.		KINGS OF JUDAH.	
Jeroboam	B.C. 990	Rehoboam	
		Abijah	
		Asa	
Nadab	968		
Baasha	966		
Elah	943		
Zimri	942		
Omri	942		
Died	931	Died	929

CHAPTER V.

JUDAH, FROM B.C. 990 TO B.C. 929.

EXCEPT in its first act, the commencement of Rehoboam's reign was not blameworthy, nor, as it respects his separate kingdom, unprosperous. In those days the wealth and welfare of a state was deemed to consist in a numerous population; and of this kind of strength the kingdom of Judah received large additions by migration from that of Israel, through the defection of the Levitical body, and the discontent with which a large and valuable portion of the population regarded the arbitrary innovations of Jeroboam. It may indeed be, in a great degree, imputed to this cause, that, although so much inferior in territorial extent, the kingdom of Judah appears throughout the history of the two kingdoms to be at least equal to that of Israel.

Rehoboam, seeing that he had an adverse kingdom so near at hand, employed the first years of his reign in putting his dominions in a condition of defence. He built and fortified a considerable number of places in Judah and Benjamin, which he stored well with arms and victuals, and in which he placed strong garrisons. For three years he remained faithful to the principles of the theocracy, and received a full measure of the prosperity which had been promised to such obedience. But when he beheld himself, as he deemed, secure and prosperous in his kingdom, his rectitude, which appears never to have been founded on very strong principles, gave way. It was not long before the acts which stained the later years of his father were more than equalled by him. Not only was idolatry openly tolerated and practised, but also the abominable acts, outrageous even to the mere instincts of morality, which some of these idolatries sanctioned or required. Thus the abominations of Judah very soon exceeded those of Israel. And we shall, throughout the historical period on which we have entered, observe one very important distinction in the religious (which, according to the spirit of the Hebrew institutions, means also the political) condition of the two kingdoms. Israel rested with tolerable uniformity in a sort of intermediate system between the true religion and idolatry, with enough of elementary truth to preserve some show of fidelity to the system, and enough of idolatry and human invention to satisfy the corrupt tendencies of the age and country. Hence, while on the one hand, it never, under its best kings, reached that purity of adherence to the Mosaical system which was sometimes exemplified in the sister kingdom; so, on the other, it never, or very rarely, fell to those depths of iniquity to which Judah sometimes sunk under its more wicked and weak kings. For Judah, resting on no such intermediate point as had been found in Israel, was in a state of constant oscillation between the *extremes* of good and evil.

In the case of Rehoboam, the loose principles which prevailed at the latter end of his father's reign, together with the fact that the mother, from whom his first ideas had been imbibed, was an Ammonitess, may partly account for the extreme facility of his fall. Indeed, with reference to the latter fact, it may be observed that among the kings there is scarcely one known to be son of a foreign and consequently idolatrous mother, who did not fall into idolatry—a circumstance which is sufficient alone to explain and justify the policy by which such connections were forbidden.

The chastisement of Rehoboam and his people was not long delayed. It was inflicted by the Egyptians, who, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, invaded the land, under Shishak their king, in such strong force as

[Shishak, king of Egypt. Thebes.]

intimated the expectation of a more formidable resistance than was encountered; or rather, perhaps, was designed to shorten the war by overawing opposition. There were 1200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and a vast body of infantry, the latter composed chiefly from the subject nations of Libya and Ethiopia. Shishak took with ease the fenced cities on which Rehoboam had placed so much reliance; and when he appeared before Jerusalem, that city appears to have opened its gates to him. Here he reaped the first-fruits of that rich spoil, from the gold of the temple and of the palace, which supplied so many subsequent demands. In the extremity of distress, while the city was in the hands of an insulting conqueror, who stripped the most sacred places of their

costly ornaments and wealth, the king of Judah and his people turned repentingly to God, and implored deliverance from his hand. He heard them; and inclined Shishak to withdraw with the rich spoil he had gained, without attempting to retain permanent possession of his conquest. Astonished himself at the facility with which that conquest had been made, this king despised the people who had submitted so unresistingly to his arms, and, according to the testimony of Herodotus*, cited by Josephus himself, he erected, at different points on his march home, triumphal columns charged with emblems very little to the honour of the nation which had not opposed him.

Although it is difficult to assign a specific reason, beyond a conqueror's thirst for spoil, for this invasion of the dominions of the son by a power which had been so friendly to the father, it does not strike us, as it does some writers, that the difficulty is increased by the fact of the matrimonial alliance which Solomon had formed with the royal family of Egypt. Rehoboam was born before that alliance was contracted, and he and his mother were not likely to be regarded with much favour by the Egyptian princess or her family. Indeed it would seem that *she* had died, or her influence had declined, or her friends deemed her wronged, before the latter end of Solomon's reign; for it is evident that the king of Egypt, this very Shishak, was not on the most friendly terms with Solomon, since he granted his favour and protection to the fugitive Jeroboam, whose prospective pretensions to divide the kingdom with the son of Solomon forms the only apparent ground of the distinction with which he was treated. This circumstance may direct attention to what appears to us the greater probability, that the expedition was undertaken at the suggestion of Jeroboam, who had much cause to be alarmed at the defection of his subjects to Rehoboam, and at the diligence which that king employed in strengthening his kingdom. The rich plunder which was to be obtained would, when pointed out, be an adequate inducement to the enterprise.

* Herod. ii. 105.

The severe lesson administered by this invasion to Rehoboam and his people was not in vain, for we read no more of idolatrous abominations during the eleven remaining years of this reign. In consequence, these were rather prosperous years for the kingdom; and, save a few skirmishes with the king of Israel, we learn of no troubles by which it was, during these years, disturbed. But, like his father, Rehoboam "desired many wives." His harem contained eighteen wives and sixty concubines,—a number which, we cannot doubt, was much opposed to the notions of the Hebrew people, although it seems rather moderate as compared with the establishment of Solomon, or those which we still find among the kings of the East. Of all his wives, the one Rehoboam loved the most was Maacha, a daughter (or granddaughter†) of Absalom. Her son, Abijah, he designed for his successor in the throne; to ensure which object he made adequate provision for his other sons while he lived, and prudently separated them from each other, by dispersing them through his dominions as governors of the principal towns. This policy was successful: for although this king had twenty-eight sons, besides three-score daughters, his settlement of the crown was not disputed at his death. This event took place in the year 973 B.C., in the eighteenth year of his reign.

Abijah, otherwise called Abijam, succeeded his father, and the first public act of his short reign appears to justify the preference which had been given to him. Jeroboam, whose policy it was to harass and weaken the house of David, and to render the two kingdoms as inimical to each other as pos-

† This lady is mentioned in three places, and in all of them the name of her father is differently given. In 1 Kings xv. 2, it is "Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom;" in 2 Chron. xi. 20, "Maachah, the daughter of Absalom;" and in 2 Chron. xiii., "Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." The Jews believe that Absalom the son of David is intended. This does not appear quite certain; but if so, we may take their explanation that Maachah was the daughter of Tamar, the daughter of Absalom; in which case, the comparison of texts will intimate that Uriel married Tamar, and Maachah was their daughter, which consequently makes her the grand-daughter of Absalom and daughter of Uriel. This, upon the whole, seems more probable than that the several names, Abishalom, Absalom, and Uriel, all point to the same person as the father of Maachah.

sible, thought the succession of the new king, young and inexperienced, a favourable opportunity for an aggressive movement. He seems therefore to have made a general military levy, which amounted to the prodigious number of 800,000 men. Abijah, when he heard of this formidable muster, was not discouraged, but, although he could raise only half the number of men, took the field against his opponent. They met near Mount Zemarim, on the borders of Ephraim. The armies were drawn out in battle array, when Abijah, who was posted on an elevated spot, finding the opportunity favourable, beckoned with his hand, and began to harangue Jeroboam and the hostile army. His speech was good, and to the purpose; but it does not seem to us entitled to the unqualified praise which it has generally received. He began with affirming the divine right of the house of David to reign over all Israel, by virtue of the immutable covenant by which Jehovah had promised to David that his posterity should reign for ever. Consequently he treated the secession of the ten tribes as an unprincipled act of rebellion against the royal dynasty of David, and against God—an act whereby the crafty Jeroboam, with a number of vain and lawless associates, had availed themselves of the weakness and inexperience of Rehoboam to deprive the chosen house of its just rights. This statement doubtless embodies the view which the house of David, and the party attached to its interests, took of the recent event. They regarded as a rebellion what was truly a revolution; and which, although, like other revolutions, it had its secret springs (as in the jealousy between the tribes of Ephraim and Judah), was not only justifiable in its abstract principles, but on the peculiar theory of the Hebrew constitution: for it had the previous sanction and appointment of Jehovah, as declared to both parties; and, in its immediate cause, sprung from a most insulting refusal of the representative of the dynasty to concede that redress of grievances which ten-twelfths of the whole nation demanded, and which it had a right to demand and obtain before it recognised him as king. However, a king of Judah could not well be expected to take any other than a dynastic and party view of this great question: and that such, necessarily, was the view of Abijah is what we have desired to explain, as the generally good spirit of his harangue has disposed hasty thinkers to take the impression which he intended to convey.

With more justice, Abijah proceeded to animadvert on the measures—the corruptions and arbitrary changes—by which Jeroboam had endeavoured to secure his kingdom; and, with becoming pride, contrasted this with the beautiful order in which, according to the law of Moses, and the institutions of David and Solomon, the worship of Jehovah was conducted by the Levitical priesthood in that "holy and beautiful house" which the Great King honoured with the visible symbol of his inhabitance. He concluded: "*We* keep the charge of Jehovah our God; but *ye* have forsaken him. And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight not against Jehovah the God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper."*

By Jeroboam this harangue was only viewed as an opportunity for executing a really clever military operation. He secretly ordered a body of men to file round the hill, and attack the Judahites in the rear, while he assailed them in front. This manœuvre was so well executed, that Abijah, by the time he had finished his speech, perceived that he was surrounded by the enemy. The army of Judah raised a cry of astonishment and alarm, and a universal panic would in all likelihood have ensued. But the priests at that instant sounded their silver trumpets, at which well-known and inspiriting signal the more stout-hearted raised a cry for help to Jehovah, and rushed upon the enemy; and their spirited example raised the courage and faith of the more timid and wavering. The host of Israel could not withstand the force which this Divine impulse gave to the arm of Judah. Their dense mass was broken and fled, and of the whole number it is said not fewer than 500,000 were slain—a slaughter, as Jose-

* Chron. xiii. 11, 12.

phus* remarks, such as never occurred in any other war, whether it were of the Greeks or the barbarians. This would still be true if the number had been much smaller. "In numbers so large," Jahn† remarks, "there may be some error of the transcribers; but it is certain that after this defeat the kingdom of Israel was considerably weakened, while that of Judah made constant progress in power and importance. We must here mention, once for all, that, owing to the mistakes of transcribers in copying numerals, we cannot answer for the correctness of the great numbers of men which are mentioned here and in the sequel. *When there are no means of rectifying these numbers, we set them down as they occur in the books.*" Such also is our own practice.

This great victory was pursued by Abijah, in the retaking and annexation to his dominion of some border towns and districts, some of which had originally belonged to Judah and Benjamin, but which the Israelites had found means to include in their portion of the divided kingdom. Among these towns was Bethel; and this being the seat of one of the golden calves, the loss of it must have been a matter of peculiar mortification to Jeroboam, and of triumph to Abijah.

The reign of Abijah was not by any means answerable to the expectations which his speech and his victory are calculated to excite. We are told that "he walked in all the sins of his father," and that "his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God;" by which it would appear that he did not take sufficient heed to avoid and remove the idolatries and abominations which Solomon and Rehoboam had introduced or tolerated. He died in 970 B.C., after a reign of three years, leaving behind him twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters, whom he had by fourteen wives.

The son who succeeded him was named ASA. He was still very young, and the affairs of the kingdom appear for some time to have been administered by his grandmother, Maachah, whose name has already been mentioned. Asa, for his virtues, his fidelity to the principles of the theocracy, and the prosperity and victory with which he was in consequence favoured, takes place in the first rank of the kings of Judah. He enjoys the high character that "his heart was perfect with Jehovah all his days:" and "he did that which was right with Jehovah, as did his father David." His first cares were directed towards the utter uprooting of the idolatries and abominations which had been suffered to creep in during the preceding reigns. He drove from his states the corrupters of youth, and with an unsparing hand he purged Jerusalem of the infamies which had long harboured there. The idols were overthrown and broken in pieces, and the groves which had sheltered the dark abominations of idolatry were cut down: even his grandmother, Maachah, he deprived of the authority—removing her from being queen—which she had abused to the encouragement of idolatry; and the idols which she had set up he utterly destroyed. By thus clearing them from defiling admixtures, the pure and grand doctrines and practices of the Mosaical system shone forth with a lustre that seemed new in that corrupt age. Again the priests of Jehovah were held in honour by the people; and again the temple, its past losses being in part repaired by the royal munificence, was provided with all that suited the dignity of the splendid ritual service there rendered to God; for Asa was enabled to replace with silver and gold a portion of the precious things which Shishak had taken from the temple, and which Rehoboam had supplied with brass.

Ten years of prosperity and peace rewarded the pious zeal of the king of Judah. In these years much was done by him to strengthen and improve his kingdom, especially in repairing and strengthening the fortified towns, and in surrounding with strong walls and towers many which had not previously been fortified. We are also informed that Asa had an army of 300,000 out of Judah, who bore shields and spears; and of 280,000 out of Benjamin, who bore shields and drew bows: all these were men of valour. This and other passages of the same nature, describing the immense mili-

* Antiq. viii. 2, 3. † Book v. sect. 36.

tary force of the small kingdoms of Judah and Israel (even setting aside those which labour under the suspicion of having been altered by the copyists), appear to intimate that the general enrolment for military service which David contemplated, but was prevented from completely executing, was accomplished by later kings. It is always important to remember, however, that the modern European sense of the word, *army*, as applied to a body of men exclusively devoted to a military profession, is unknown to the history of this period; and in the statement before us we are to see no more than that the men thus numbered were provided with weapons (or that the king had weapons to arm them), and were, the whole or any part of them, bound to obey any call from the king into actual service.

An occasion for such a call occurred to Asa after ten years of prosperity and peace. His dominions were then exposed to a most formidable invasion from "Zerah the Ethiopian," or Cushite, with a million of men and three hundred chariots. It is beyond the range of probability, from the state of Egypt at this time, in the reign of Osorkon I.*, who succeeded Sheshonk (or Shishak), that an army under Zerah should have marched through Egypt from the Ethiopia south of the cataracts of the Nile. It must therefore be concluded that the army was partly composed of the Cushites (or Ethiopians) of Arabia, the original seat of all the Cushites; and as the army was partly composed of Libyans, who, if this supposition be correct, could not well have passed from Africa through the breadth of Egypt on this occasion, it may, with very sufficient probability, be conjectured that they formed a portion of the Libyan auxiliaries in the army with which Shishak invaded Palestine, twenty-five years before, and who, instead of returning to their own deserts, deemed it quite as well to remain in those of Arabia Petræa, and in the country between Egypt and Palestine. And this explanation seems to be confirmed by the fact, which appears in the sequel, that they held some border towns (such as Gerar) in this district. The flocks and herds, and the tents of the invading host, sufficiently intimate the nomade character of the invasion.

This emergency was met by Asa in the true spirit of the theocracy. Fully conscious of the physical inadequacy of his force to meet the enemy, he nevertheless went forth boldly to give them battle, trusting in Jehovah, who had so often given his people the victory against far greater odds, and to whom he made the public and becoming appeal:—"O Jehovah, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: Help us, O Jehovah, our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee." The consequence of this proper manifestation of reliance upon their Omnipotent King was a very splendid victory over the Cushites. They were defeated in the great battle of Mareshah†, in the valley of Zephathah, and fled before the army of Judah, which commenced a vigorous pursuit, attended with great slaughter. The Ethiopians and Libyans fled towards their tents and to Gerar and other towns, which some of them (we have supposed the Libyans) occupied on the border land towards Philistia. Here the conquerors found a rich spoil of cattle from the camps of the nomades, and of goods from the towns. On their triumphal return, they were met by the prophet Obed, who excited the piety and gratitude of the king and his army by reminding them to whom the victory was really due, even to Jehovah; and he called to their remembrance the privilege they enjoyed, as contrasted with the kingdom of Israel, in the marked and beneficent protection and care of their Great King, and hinted at the duties which resulted from the enjoyment of such privileges. This was attended with very good effects; and in the warmth of his gratitude for the deliverance with which he had been favoured, Asa prosecuted his reforms with new vigour. He rooted out every remnant of idolatry, and

* His name is so given in the monuments, but in ancient writers it is *Osorthon*.

† This was a town fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 8). It was the birthplace of the prophet Micah.

engaged the whole people to renew their covenant with Jehovah.

It appears that the effect of the manifest tokens of the Divine favour which Asa received, especially in the great victory over Zerah, was felt in the neighbouring kingdom, and induced large numbers of the subjects of Baasha to migrate into his dominions. A constant and large accession of men, induced by such considerations, and by revived attachment to the theocracy, was calculated to give, and did give, a vast superiority of moral character to the kingdom of Judah. It was probably, as intimated in the last chapter, this tendency of his most valuable subjects to migrate into Judah, which induced Baasha to take the town of Ramah, and fortify it for a frontier barrier. The measure which Asa took on this occasion, of bribing the king of Syria to forego his previous alliance with Baasha, and cause a diversion in his own favour by invading the kingdom of Israel, was effectual as to the recovery of Ramah; for the death of Baasha, the following year, prevented him from resuming his designs. Asa availed himself of the materials which Baasha had brought together for the fortification of Ramah, to fortify the towns of Geba and Mizpeh. This advantage was, however, dearly purchased by the treasure of the temple and the palace which he was obliged to squander, to secure the assistance of the Syrians: and still more, by the displeasure of God, who denounced this proceeding as not only wrong in itself, but as indicating a want of that confidence in Him through which he had been enabled to overthrow the vast host which the Cushites brought against him. This intimation of the Divine displeasure was conveyed to the king by the prophet Hanani, and was received by Asa with such resentment that he put the messenger in prison. Indeed, he appears to have grown increasingly irritable in the later years of his reign, in consequence of which he was led to commit many acts of severity and injustice. But for this some allowance may be made, in consideration of his sufferings from a disease in his feet, which appears to have been the gout. With reference to this disease, Asa incurs some blame in the Scriptural narrative for his resort to "the physicians instead of relying upon God;" the cause of which rather extraordinary censure is probably to be found in the fact that those physicians who were not priests or Levites (in whose hands the medical science of the Hebrews chiefly rested) were foreigners and idolaters, who trusted more to superstitious rites and incantations than to the simple remedies which nature offered. With all these defects, for which much allowance may be made, Asa bears a good character in the Scriptural narrative, on account of the general rectitude of his conduct, and of his zealous services in upholding the great principles of the theocracy.

Asa died in the year 929 B.C., in the second year of Ahab, king of Israel, and after a long and, upon the whole, prosperous reign of forty-one years. He was sincerely lamented by all his subjects, who, according to their mode of testifying their final approbation, honoured his remains with a magnificent funeral. His body, laid on a bed of state, was burned with vast quantities of aromatic substances; and the ashes, collected with care, were afterwards deposited in the sepulchre which he had prepared for himself on Mount Zion. The burning of the dead, as a rite of sepulture, had originally been regarded with dislike by the Hebrews. But a change of feeling in this matter had by this time taken place; for the practice is not now mentioned as a new thing, and had probably been some time previously introduced. Afterwards burning was considered the most distinguished honour which could be rendered to the dead, and the omission of it, in the case of royal personages, a disgrace*. But in later days the Jews conceived a dislike to this rite; and their doctors endeavoured, in consequence, to pervert the passages of Scripture which refer to it, so as to induce a belief that the aromatic substances alone, and not the body, were burnt.

* See 2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxi. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 5; Amos vi. 10.

CONTEMPORARY KINGS.

Kings of Judah.		Kings of Israel.	
Rehoboam	B.C. 990	Jeroboam	B.C. 990
Abijah	973	——	——
Asa	970	——	——
——	——	Baasha	966
——	——	Elah	943
——	——	Zimri and Omri	942
——	——	Ahab	931
Died	929	Died	909

CHAPTER VI.

ISRAEL, FROM 931 B.C. TO 895 B.C.

AHAB, the son of Omri, mounted the throne of Israel in the year 931 B.C., being the thirty-eighth year of Asa, king of Judah. This king was, throughout his reign of twenty-two years, entirely under the influence of his idolatrous and unprincipled wife, Jezebel, a daughter of Ethbaal, or Ithobalus, king of Tyre. Hitherto the irregularities connected with the service before the golden calves, as symbols of Jehovah, had formed the chief offence of Israel. But now Ahab and Jezebel united their authority to introduce the gods of other nations. The king built a temple in Samaria, erected an image, and consecrated a grove to Baal, the god of the Sidonians. Jezebel, earnest in promoting the worship of her own god, maintained a multitude of priests and prophets of Baal. In a few years idolatry became the predominant religion of the land; and Jehovah, and the golden calves as representations of him, were viewed with no more reverence than Baal and his image. It now appeared as if the knowledge of the true God was for ever lost to the Israelites; but Elijah the prophet boldly stood up, and opposed himself to the authority of the king, and succeeded in retaining many of his countrymen in the worship of Jehovah. The greater the power was which supported idolatry, so much the more striking were the prophecies and miracles which directed the attention of the Israelites to Jehovah, and brought disgrace upon the idols, and confusion on their worshippers. The history of this great and memorable struggle gives to the narrative of Ahab's reign an unusual prominence and extent in the Hebrew annals; and although a writer studious of brevity might at the first view be disposed to omit, as episodical, much of the history of Elijah the Tishbite*, a little reflection will render it manifest that the prominence given to the history of this illustrious champion for the truth, was a designed and necessary result from the fact that the history of the Hebrew nation is the history of a church; and that, although the history of this great controversy might be omitted or overlooked by those who erroneously regard the history of the Hebrews merely as a *political* history, in the other point of view it becomes of the most vital importance.

The first appearance of Elijah is with great abruptness to announce a drought, and consequent famine, for the punishment of the idolatry into which the nation had fallen; and that this calamity should only be removed at his own intercession. He apprehended that the iniquities of the land would

* He is introduced as "Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead." It is probable therefore that the designation of "Tishbite" is from some town in Gilead, which cannot now be clearly ascertained.

bring down upon it destructions from God; and he therefore prayed for this lesser visitation, which might possibly bring the king and people to repentance.

After such a denunciation, it was necessary that the prophet should withdraw himself from the presence and solicitations of the king, when the drought should commence, which it did, probably, about the sixth year of Ahab. Accordingly, obeying the directions of the divine oracle, he withdrew to his native district beyond Jordan, and hid himself in a cave by the brook Cherith; where the providence of God secured his support by putting it into the hearts of the Arabs* encamped in the neighbourhood to send him bread and meat every morning and evening; and the brook furnished him with drink, until "the end of the year," or beginning of spring, when it was dried up from the continued drought.

It was probably under the irritation produced by the first pressure of the calamity, that Jezebel induced the king to issue orders for the destruction of all the prophets of Jehovah. Many of them perished: but a good and devout man, even in the palace of Ahab, —Obadiah, the steward of his household,— managed to save a hundred of the number by sheltering them in caverns, where he provided for their maintenance until, probably, an opportunity was found for their escape into the kingdom of Judah.

When the brook of Cherith was dried up, the prophet was directed by the Divine Voice to proceed westward to Sarepta†, a town of Sidon, under the dominion of Jezebel's father; where he lodged with a poor widow, and was miraculously supported with her and her family for a considerable time, according to his own prediction—that her single barrel of meal should not waste, nor her single cruse of oil fail, until that day when Jehovah should send rain upon the earth. While he remained at this place, the prophet, by his prayers to God, restored to life the son of the widow with whom he lodged. Here he stayed until the end of three years from the commencement of the drought, when he was commanded to go and show himself to Ahab. That king had meanwhile caused the most diligent search to be made for him in every quarter, doubtless with the view of inducing him to offer up those intercessions through which alone the present grievous calamity could terminate. But at this time, having probably relinquished this search as hopeless, the attention of the king was directed to the discovery of any remaining supplies of water which might still exist in the land. He had, therefore, for the purposes of this exploration, divided the country between himself and Obadiah; and both proceeded personally to visit all the brooks and fountains of the land. Obadiah was journeying on this mission, when Elijah, who was returning from Sarepta, met him, and commissioned him to announce his arrival to Ahab. The king, when he saw the prophet, reproached him as the cause of the national calamities, —"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But the prophet boldly retorted the charge upon himself and his father's house, because they had forsaken Jehovah and followed Baal. He then secured the attention of the king, by intimating an intention of interceding for rain; and required him to call a general assembly of all the people at Mount Carmel, and also to bring all the prophets or priests of Baal‡, and of the groves.

There, in the audience of that vast assembly, Elijah reproached the people with the destruction of the prophets of Jehovah, of whom, he alleged, that he only remained, while the prophets of Baal alone were four hundred and fifty, fed at the table of Jezebel; and then he called them to account for their divided worship,—"How long halt ye between two opinions? If JEHOVAH be the God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people intimated their uncertainty by their silence to this appeal; on which the prophet, fully conscious of his un-

* The Hebrew word, *orebim*, may mean *ravens*, or *Arabians*, or *Orebim* as a proper name, or STRANGERS. Without any wish to lessen a miracle, we have adopted what we consider the more likely interpretation, as an unnecessary multiplication of miracles tends to their depreciation.

† Now called *Sarphan*, about three hours' journey from Sidon on the way to Tyre.

‡ It may assist the comprehension of the narrative to know that Baal was an impersonation of the sun.

limited commission, proposed a solemn sacrifice to each, and "the God that answereth by fire (to consume his sacrifice) let him be God." As this was a fair trial of Baal's supposed power in his own element, the most zealous of his worshippers could make no objection to it, and the proposal was approved by all the people. Accordingly, when Baal answered not the earnest and ultimately maddened invocations of his prophets,—but Jehovah instantly answered the prayer of Elijah, by sending fire (as on former occasions) to consume the victim on the altar, although it had previously been inundated with water by the direction of the prophet,—then the people, yielding to one mighty impulse of conviction, fell upon their faces, and cried, "JEHOVAH, HE IS THE GOD! JEHOVAH, HE IS THE GOD!"—thus also expressing that Baal was *not* the God, and rejecting him. To ratify this abjuration of Baal, Elijah commanded them to destroy his priests; and this, in the enthusiasm of their rekindled zeal for Jehovah, they immediately did, at the brook Kishon, which had been the scene of Barak's victory over the Canaanites.

Immediately after this sublime national act of acknowledgment of Jehovah and rejection of Baal, the prophet went up to the top of Carmel, and prayed fervently for rain seven times; the promise of which (speedily followed by fulfilment) at last appeared in the form of "a little cloud .... like a man's hand," rising out of the Mediterranean sea—a phenomenon which, in warm maritime climates, is not the unusual harbinger of rain.

This remarkable transaction may be ascribed to the tenth year of Ahab's reign.

Elijah was now compelled to fly for his life, to avoid the threatened vengeance of Jezebel for the destruction of her prophets. He fled southward, and when he had travelled nearly 100 miles, from Samaria to Beersheba, he left his servant and went alone a day's journey into the wilderness. There as he sat, for rest and shelter, under the scanty shade which a broom tree offered, the mighty spirit by which he had hitherto been sustained gave way, and he prayed for death to end his troubles. "It is enough:" he cried, "now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers!" To strengthen his sinking faith and to reward his sufferings in the cause of the God of Israel, whose honour he had so zealously vindicated, the prophet was encouraged by an angel to undertake a long journey to "the mount of God," Horeb, where the Divine presence had been manifested to Moses, the founder of the law; and of which a further manifestation was now probably promised to this great champion and restorer of the same law. On this mysterious occasion the angel touched him twice, to rouse him from his sleep, and twice made him eat of food which he found prepared for him. In the strength which that food gave, the prophet journeyed (doubtless by a circuitous route) forty days, until he came, it is supposed, to the cave where Moses was stationed, when he saw the glory of Jehovah in "the cleft of the rock."

There he heard the voice of Jehovah calling to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The prophet, evidently recognising that voice, said, "I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Then the voice commanded him to go forth, for Jehovah was about to pass by. The first harbinger of the Divine presence was a great and strong wind, which rent the mountain and brake the rock in pieces;—but Jehovah was not in that wind. Then followed an earthquake;—but Jehovah was not in the earthquake. This was succeeded by a fire;—but Jehovah was not in the fire. After this, came "*a still small Voice;*" and when the prophet heard it, he knew the Voice of God, and, reverently hiding his face in his mantle, he stood forth in the entrance of the cave. The Voice repeated the former question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" to which the same answer as before was returned. The Voice, in reply, gently rebuked the prophet for his crimination of the whole people of Israel, and his discouraging representation of himself as the only prophet left. "Yet I have left to me *seven thousand* in Israel which have not bowed unto Baal."

He was further instructed to return by a different route, by the way of Damascus; and, by the way to anoint or appoint Elisha to be his own successor, and (either by himself or Elisha) Hazael to be King of Damascene-Syria, and Jehu to be King of Israel—as the chosen ministers of Divine vengeance upon the house and people of Ahab.

Of the three, Elisha was the only one to whom Elijah himself made known this appointment. Elisha was the son of Shaphat, an opulent man of Abel-meholah, in the half tribe of Manasseh, west of the Jordan. The prophet found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, when, by a significant action, still well understood in the East, that of throwing his own mantle upon him, he conveyed the intimation of his prophetic call. That call was understood and obeyed by Elisha; and after having, with the prophet's permission, taken leave of his parents, he hastened to follow Elijah, to whom he ever after remained attached.

It is singular that the first formal alliance between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah took place during the reigns of two princes of such opposite characters as Ahab in Israel, and Jehoshaphat in Judah. But it was so: and in forming it, and in cementing it by the marriage of his eldest son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, he doubtless acted from very ill considered policy, and laid in a great store of disasters for himself and his house. It is unfortunate that we are unacquainted with the motives which led to this most unhappy connection. A close and intimate union between the two kingdoms could not but be, *in itself*, a political good; and the error of Jehoshaphat probably lay in considering this fact by itself, without taking due account of that evil character of Ahab and his house, and that alienation of his people from God, which were calculated to neutralise, and actually did far more than neutralise, the natural advantages of such alliance. The marriage took place in the fifteenth year of Ahab's, and the thirteenth of Jehoshaphat's reign.

Not long after this, Ahab had cause to be alarmed at the designs of Ben-hadad, the King of Damascene-Syria, which kingdom had been gathering such strength, while that of the Hebrews had been weakened by divisions and by misconduct, that even the subjugation of Israel did not seem to Ben-hadad an enterprise to which his ambition might not aspire. To this end he made immense preparations: he claimed the united aid of all his tributary princes, thirty-two in number, and ultimately appeared with all his forces before Samaria, to which he laid siege. He first summoned Ahab to deliver up all his most precious things; and, compelled by dire necessity, the King of Israel consented. But Ben-hadad was only induced, by this readiness of yielding, to enhance his terms, and sent further demands, which were so very hard and insulting, that the spirit of Ahab was at last roused; and, supported by the advice of his council, he determined to act on the defensive. Soon after, a prophet came with the promise of victory over the vast host of the Syrians, by means of a mere handful of spirited young men who were particularly indicated.

The confidence of the Syrians was so great that they led a careless and jovial life, thinking of little but of indulgence in wine and good cheer, of which the king himself set the example. In the midst of these feasts, a body of two hundred and thirty-two men was seen to leave the city, and advance towards the camp. Ben-hadad, when he heard of it, quietly ordered them to be taken alive, whether they came for peace or for war. But suddenly these men fell upon the advanced sentinels, and upon all who were near them; and the cries and confusion of so many persons, taken as it were by surprise, was instrumental in creating a general panic among the vast Syrian host. Drawn himself by the irresistible movement, Ben-hadad fled on horseback, with all his army; and the troops of Israel (7000 in number), which attended the motions and watched the effect of the sally of the brave two hundred and thirty-two, closely pursued the flying Syrians, and rendered the victory complete.

The prophet who foretold this victory now apprised Ahab that Ben-hadad would renew his attempts the ensuing year. This took

place accordingly. The Syrians came in equal force as before, and, as they thought, with wiser counsels. The kingdom of Damascene-Syria was mostly a plain; whereas the kingdom of Israel, and the site of Samaria in particular, was mountainous. Rightly attributing their defeat to the God (or, as they chose in their idolatrous ignorance to say, the *gods*) of Israel, they reasoned that he was a god of the hills, and therefore among the hills more powerful than their gods, who were gods of the valleys and the plains. Instead therefore of going among the hills, as before, they would now fight in the plains, where they could not doubt of success. This reasoning, however absurd it now seems to us, and did then seem (such were their privileges) to all enlightened Israelites, was in strict and philosophical accordance with the first principles of idolatry, and the general system of national and local deities. But such a view being taken by them, it became necessary to Jehovah to vindicate his own honour and assert his omnipotence by their overthrow. *For this reason* he delivered this vast host that covered the land into the hands of the comparatively small and feeble host of Israel. The Syrians were cut in pieces; 100,000 of their number were left dead upon the field of battle, and the rest were entirely dispersed. Ben-hadad, with a large number of the fugitives, sought refuge in Aphek; but by the sudden fall of the wall of that fortified town, 27,000 of his men were crushed to death, and the place was rendered defenceless. Nothing was now left to him but to yield himself up to Ahab. That monarch, weak and criminal by turns, received the Syrian king into his friendship, and formed an impious alliance with him, regardless not only of the law, but of the honour of God, who had given him the victory, and had delivered for punishment into his hands this blasphemer and enemy of his Great Name. For this he was, in the name of Jehovah, severely rebuked and threatened by one of "the sons of the prophets," by the way-side; in consequence, he withdrew to his palace "heavy and displeased."

The history of Ahab affords one more, and the last, interview between him and Elijah. This was about nine years after the grand solemnity at Mount Carmel, and the nineteenth of Ahab's reign.

At that time the king took a fancy to enlarge his own garden by taking into it an adjoining vineyard which formed part of the patrimonial estate of a person named Naboth. He made him the fair offer of its value in money, or to give him some other piece of land of equal value; but Naboth, considering it a religious duty to preserve "the inheritance of his fathers," declined on any terms to alienate it. The reason was good, and ought to have satisfied the king. But he received the refusal like a spoiled child; he lay down upon his bed, and turned away his face to the wall, and refused to take his food. When his wife heard of this she came to him, and, having learned the cause of his grief, she said indignantly, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: *I will give thee* the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite." Accordingly, she procured Naboth to be put to death under the form of law. At a public feast he was accused by suborned witnesses of blasphemy, for which he was stoned to death, and his estates confiscated to the king. Jezebel then went to Ahab, apprised him of what had happened, and told him to go down and take possession of the vineyard. It is clear that, if he did not suggest, he approved of the crime, and proceeded with joy to reap the fruits of it. But in the vineyard of Naboth the unexpected and unwelcome sight of Elijah the prophet met his view. Struck by his own conscience, he cried, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" To which Elijah replied, "I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of Jehovah." He then proceeded to denounce the doom of utter extermination upon himself and his house for his manifold iniquities; and then, with reference to the immediate offence, he said, "Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? .... Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine..... And of Jezebel also spake Jehovah, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of

Jezreel. Him who dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." We are immediately reminded, however, that this terrible doom, although now denounced, as following this crowning deed of guilt, was really a consequence of this *and all the other* iniquities of Ahab's reign; for it is added, "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of Jehovah, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel."

When Ahab heard the heavy doom pronounced against him by the prophet, "he rent his clothes (in token of extreme grief), and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." This conduct found some acceptance with God, who said to Elijah, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring this evil upon his house." From the judicial sentence specially applicable to the case of Naboth, there was, however, no dispensation; as it behoved the Divine king to demonstrate that he still possessed and exercised the authority of supreme civil governor, and that the kings were responsible to him and punishable by him. This was signally shown in the sequel.

Israel was now at peace with Syria, but it had not recovered possession of all the places which had at different times been lost to that power. Of these, Ramoth Gilead, beyond Jordan, was one of which, from its proximity and importance, Ahab was particularly anxious to regain possession. He therefore resolved to expel the Syrian garrison from that place; and as he was aware that the attempt would be opposed by the whole power of the Syrian kingdom, he claimed the assistance of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, which that prince, with the facility of disposition which formed the chief defect of his excellent character, very readily granted. Nevertheless, when the preparations were completed, Jehoshaphat, unsatisfied by the assurances of success which Ahab's own "prophets" had given, desired that some other prophet of Jehovah should be consulted. This request was more distasteful to Ahab than he liked to avow. "There is yet one man," he said, "Micaiah, the son of Imlah, ... but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." He was, however, sent for: and although the messenger had strongly inculcated upon him the necessity of making his counsel conformable to the wishes of the king and the predictions of his own prophets, the undaunted Micaiah boldly foretold the fatal result of the expedition. At this the king was so much enraged, that he ordered him to be kept in confinement, and fed with the bread and water of affliction until he returned in peace. "If thou return at all in peace," rejoined the faithful prophet, "then Jehovah hath not spoken by me."

Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, repaid the misplaced kindness of Ahab by the most bitter enmity against his person; and he gave strict orders to his troops that their principal object should be his destruction. Ahab seems to have had some private information of this; for he went, himself, disguised to the battle, and treacherously persuaded Jehoshaphat to appear in all the ensigns of his high rank. In consequence of this the king of Judah was nearly slain, being surrounded by the Syrians, who pressed towards the point in which one royally arrayed appeared. But they discovered their mistake in time, and turned their attention in another direction. Ahab, with all his contrivance, could not avoid his doom. A Syrian archer sent forth from his bow an arrow at random. Guided by the unseen Power which had numbered the days of Ahab, that arrow found the disguised king, penetrated between the joints of his strong armour, and gave him his death-wound. He directed his charioteer to drive him out of the battle; but, perceiving that a general action was coming on, he remained, and was held up in his chariot until the evening, animating his friends by his voice and presence. After the fall of night had terminated the combat, the king died, and the

army was directed to disperse. The body of Ahab was taken to Samaria, to be deposited in the family sepulchre; and to mark the literal fulfilment of Elijah's prophecy, the historian acquaints us that his chariot was washed, and his armour rinsed in the pool of Samaria, where the dogs licked up the blood that he had lost. Thus signally, in the mysterious dispensations of Divine providence, were reconciled the seemingly discordant declarations of two prophets, one of whom had foretold his death at Ramoth Gilead, and the other that dogs should claim his blood in Samaria.

The history of Ahab is almost exclusively occupied with the record of his guilt, and we are referred for information concerning his other public acts to a chronicle which no longer exists. But it transpires that he built several cities in Israel, and also a palace, which, from the quantities of ivory with which it was ornamented, was distinguished as "the ivory house."

Ahab's death took place in the year 909 B.C., after a reign of twenty-two years.

He was succeeded in his throne and in his sin by his son AHAZIAH. The chief event of his short reign was the revolt of the Moabites who, since their subjection by David, had continued to supply Israel with a rich tribute of flocks and fleeces*. Ahaziah himself having received serious injuries by a fall through a lattice in an upper chamber of his palace, sent messengers into the land of the Philistines, to consult Baal-zebub, the fly-god of Ekron, whether he should recover. But they were met on the way by the prophet Elijah, who sent them back to the king with a denunciation of death, for his impiety in forsaking the God of Israel and resorting to strange gods. The messengers knew not the prophet; but when they described him to the king as a man clad with a hairy garment, and with a leathern girdle about his loins, he recognised Elijah, and sent an officer with fifty men to apprehend him. But the prophet, whom they found sitting upon a hill, called down fire from heaven, which consumed this party, and also a second; but he went voluntarily with the third, the officer in command of which humbled himself before him, and besought him. The prophet confirmed to the king himself his former denunciation of speedy death; and, accordingly, Ahaziah died, after a short reign of two years, leaving no son to succeed him. This king maintained the alliance which his father had established with King Jehoshaphat, and even persuaded that monarch to admit him to share in his contemplated maritime expedition to the regions of Ophir, of which there will be occasion to speak in the next chapter.

Ahaziah was succeeded by his brother JEHORAM. This king, like his predecessors, "wrought evil in the sight of Jehovah," yet not to the same extent of enormity as they; for although the loose and irregular service of the golden calves was maintained by him, he overthrew the images of Baal, and discouraged the grosser idolatries which his father and brother had introduced.

The first and most urgent care of the new king was to reduce to obedience the Moabites, who, as just mentioned, had revolted on the death of Ahab. As the king of Judah had himself been troubled by the Moabites, he readily undertook to take a very prominent part in this enterprise, to which he also brought the support of his own tributary, the king of Edom. The plan of the campaign was, that the allied army should invade the land of Moab in its least defensible quarter, by going round by "the wilderness of Edom," southward of the Dead Sea; which also offered the advantage that the forces of the king of Israel could be successively joined by those of the kings of Judah and Edom on the march. This circuitous march occupied seven days; and towards the end of it the army and the horses suffered greatly from thirst, probably occasioned by the failure of the wells and brooks, from which an adequate supply of water had been expected. Much loss had already been incurred through this unexpected drought, and nothing less than utter ruin seemed to impend over the allies when they lay on the borders of Moab, within view of the enemy, which had ad-

* The annual tribute rendered by the Moabites had been 100,000 lambs and 100,000 wethers, with their wool.

vanced to meet them. In this emergency the very proper course occurred to Jehoshaphat of consulting a prophet of Jehovah. On inquiry it was discovered that Elisha, who had "poured water on the hands of Elijah"—a proverbial expression from the most conspicuous act of service in a personal attendant—was the only prophet to be found in that neighbourhood. Full of the faith of his illustrious master, this faithful disciple of Elijah had beheld the Jordan divide before that prophet, and had been with him when, upborne by the whirlwind, he was taken gloriously away from the earth in the chariot and horses which glowed like fire, and who had substituted himself in his mission to work marvels and reprove kings in the name of Jehovah. Already had the "spirit and power of Elias," which abode in him, been manifested to all Israel by the prodigies he had wrought. The waters of the Jordan had divided before him, the second time, when smote by the fallen mantle of Elijah;—the bad waters of Jericho had become permanently wholesome at his word;—and to evince the power of his curse, bears from the woods had destroyed forty-two young men belonging to idolatrous Bethel, who, joining unbelief to insult, had bade him, in terms of mockery and derision,—"Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!"—ascend after his master.

The prophet, thus already distinguished, was sought in his retreat by the three kings. His greeting of Jehoram was severe, "What have *I* to do with *thee?* Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother." Nevertheless, but avowedly on the sole account of the good Jehoshaphat, he interested himself for the salvation of the army, which was in such imminent danger: and, having consulted the Lord, he promised that on the morrow there should be such an abundance of water, that the bed of the torrent, near which the army was encamped, should not be able to contain it; and, more than this, he also indicated that this should be but the prelude of a signal victory over and complete ruin of the enemy.

All things happened as he had said. In the morning, at the time of offering sacrifice, the waters descended in such full flood from the heights of Edom, that the camp would have been submerged, had not the army, by the direction of the prophet, previously dug large ditches to receive the redundant waters. All this was unknown to the Moabites, who, when they arose in the morning, and, on looking towards the camp of the allies, beheld the lurid rays of the rising sun reflected from the waters, which now covered the arid sands of yesterday, doubted not that it was blood which they saw, and formed the not by any means improbable conclusion that the armies of Israel and Judah had quarrelled with and destroyed each other. They therefore rushed without the least care or order to the pillage of the camp; but so far from finding it deserted, they were surrounded and cut in pieces by the armed and now invigorated allies. The remnant of the army was pursued into the interior of the country by the conquerors, whose course was blackened by the fire and crimsoned by the sword. Ultimately they invested the metropolitan city of Kir-haraseth*, in which the king, Mesha, had taken refuge. One part of the walls had already been destroyed, and the king, seeing he could no longer defend the place, attempted to break through the besieging host at the head of seven hundred swordsmen. But failing in this desperate effort, he sought to propitiate his cruel gods by offering up the frightful sacrifice of his eldest son, the heir of his throne, in the breach. Seized with horror at this spectacle, the conquering kings abandoned the siege, withdrew from the country, and returned to their own states. In taking this step they did not consider, or, perhaps, not care, that they gave to the horrible act of the Moabite the very effect which he desired, and enabled him to delude himself with the persuasion that his sacrifice had been successful, and well-pleasing to the powers of heaven.

In the remaining history of Jehoram's reign, the prophet Elisha occupies nearly as conspicuous a place as Elijah did in that of Ahab. The wonders wrought by his hands were numerous; but they were less signal,

* The same place which is otherwise called Rabbath-Moab, and, classically, Areopolis.

and less attended with public and important results—less designed to effect public objects, than those of his master. Indeed, his *national* acts were less considerable than those of Elijah; and although he possessed great influence, and was undoubtedly the foremost man of his age, he wanted those energies of character, and that consuming zeal which his predecessor manifested; or, perhaps more correctly, the exigencies of the times were not such as to call for the exercise of such endowments as had been possessed by Elijah. But, although those of his successor were *different* in their kind, we know not that, with regard to *the differing time*, they were less useful or eminent. In this, and in a thousand other historical examples—more especially in the history of the Hebrews—we see men raised up for, and proportioned to, the times in which they live, and the occasions which call for them. The most eminent of the prophets, since Moses, was given to the most corrupt time; in which only a man of his indomitable, ardent, and almost fierce spirit, could have been equal to the fiery and almost single-handed struggle for God against principalities and powers. Elisha fell in milder times, and was correspondingly of a milder character, although he was not found unequal to any of the more trying circumstances which arose during the period of his prophetic administration. Indeed his conduct on such occasions was such as to suggest that it was only the milder spirit of the time on which he fell, precluding occasion for their exercise, that prevented the manifestation in him of that grander class of endowments which his predecessor displayed. As it was, Elisha, instead of being, like his master, driven by persecution from the haunts of men to the deserts and the mountains, and reduced to a state of dependence on the special providence of God for the bread he ate and the water he drank, —enjoyed a sufficiency of all things, and lived in honour and esteem among his countrymen; and even among the purple and fine linen of kings' courts, the rough mantle of the prophet was regarded with respect.

Ir such a history as the present it is only necessary to report those of his acts which were connected with, or bore upon, the public history of the nation; yet his more private acts may be also briefly indicated for the sake of the illustration which they afford of the spirit and manners of the time.

The first of his operations which we read of, after that which connected him with the deliverance of Israel and the defeat of the Moabites, was an act of benevolence towards the widow of one of those "sons of the prophets" who had now come under his supervision. He had died without having the means of satisfying a debt he had incurred, in consequence of which the creditor was disposed to indemnify himself by making bondsmen of her two sons; but, on her complaint to Elisha, he multiplied a small quantity of oil which she possessed, until the price it brought more than sufficed to pay the implacable creditor.

The occasions of the prophet frequently led him to visit the city of Shunem, which being observed by a benevolent woman, she suggested to her husband that they should prepare a small separate apartment*, and furnish it with a bed, a table, a seat, and a lamp; and that this should be reserved for his use when he visited Shunem. This was accordingly done, and the prophet accepted the hospitalities of these good Shunemites. Elisha was very sensible of their kind attention, and wished to repay it by some substantial benefit. He sent for the woman, and offered to speak to the king or to the captain of the host on her behalf. This she declined; and the prophet felt at a loss what to do for them, until it was suggested by his servant Gehazi that the woman had long been childless, on which Elisha again sent for her, and as she stood respectfully at the door, he conveyed to her the astonishing intimation that, nine months from thence, her arms should embrace a son. Accordingly, the child was born, and had grown up, when one day he received a stroke of the sun on his head, and died very soon. The mother

* Called in our version "a little chamber in the wall. It denotes doubtless what the Arabs still call by the same name (Oleah), which is a small building, generally at some distance from the house, like a summer-house in our gardens.

laid him on the prophet's bed, and, actuated by an undefinable but intelligible impulse, sought and obtained the permission of her husband to go to Elisha, who was known to be then at Carmel. Accordingly, an ass was saddled, on which, driven by a servant on foot, she sped to that place. Elisha saw her afar off, and said to Gehazi, "Behold, yonder is that Shunemite! Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her,—Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" The bereaved mother answered, "It is well," but pressed on towards the man of God. On approaching him she alighted from her beast, and threw herself at his feet, on which she laid hold. The officious Gehazi drew nigh to thrust her away, but Elisha checked him,—"Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." When, in a few broken exclamations, she had made known the cause of her grief, the prophet gave his staff to Gehazi, with instructions to go and lay it on the face of the child. But the mother refused to leave the prophet, and he was induced to rise and return with her. They met Gehazi on his way back, who told them, "The child is not awaked!" They hasted on, and the prophet shut himself up with the child. It was not long before he directed the mother to be called, and presented to her the *living* boy.

[Seething Pottage.]

Another time, when there was a dearth in the land, Elisha was at the school of the prophets at Gilgal; and at the proper time gave the order to the servants, "Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets." When this was dressed, it was found that a wild and bitter gourd had been gathered and shred into the pot by mistake. "O thou man of God! there is death in the pot!" cried the sons of the prophets, when they began to eat. But Elisha directed a handful of meal to be cast into the pot, and it was found that all the poisonous qualities of the pottage had disappeared.

In the kingdom of Damascene-Syria, the chief captain of the host, high in the favour and confidence of the king, was a person called Naaman, who had the misfortune of being a leper. This, which would have been a disqualification for all employment and society in Israel, could not but be a great annoyance and distress to a public man in Syria. When therefore a little Hebrew girl, who in a former war had been taken captive, and was now a slave in the household of this personage, was heard to say, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy;" she was eagerly questioned on the matter, and the result was that the king of Syria sent Naaman, with a splendid retinue and camels laden with presents* to Samaria, with a sufficiently laconic letter to the king Jehoram. "When this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayst recover him of his leprosy." The king of Israel was utterly confounded when he read this epistle. He rent his clothes, and cried, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy. Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." Intelligence of this affair, and of the king's vexation, was brought to Elisha, who desired that the Syrian stranger might be sent to him. Accordingly Naaman came with his chariot and horses and imposing retinue, and stood before the door of Elisha's house. The prophet did not make his appearance; but sent out a message directing him to go and bathe seven times in the river Jordan. The self-esteem of the distinguished leper was

* The presents included ten talents of silver (3750*l.*) 6000 shekels of gold (12,000*l.*), and ten dresses of honour.

much hurt at this treatment. He expected that Elisha would have paid him personal attention and respect, and would have healed him by an appeal to his God, Jehovah, and by the stroking of his hand. He therefore turned and went away in a rage, exclaiming, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" His attendants, however, succeeded in soothing him, and persuaded him to follow the prophet's directions; and when he rose, perfectly cleansed, from the Jordan, his feelings turned to conviction and gratitude; he returned to Samaria, and presented himself to the prophet, declaring his belief that Jehovah was the true and only God, and that henceforth he would offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices to no other. He would also have pressed upon his acceptance a valuable present, but this was firmly declined by Elisha; and when his covetous servant Gehazi, compromised the honour of God and of his own master, by following the Syrian, to ask a gift in the name of the prophet, the leprosy from which Naaman had been cleansed was declared by the prophet to be the abiding portion of him and of his race.

These and other miracles wrought by this prophet, fixed upon him *personally* the regard and veneration of the people; and while there is reason to think that the state of manners and of religion was not altogether so bad as it had been under Ahab, the practices and ideas of their corrupt system of religion were now too closely interwoven with their habits of life and mind to be easily shaken off. They rested on their intermediate system. Habit had reconciled even their consciences to it; and in general, to fall back upon it, after having strayed into *foreign* idolatries, was in their sight a complete and perfect reformation. And as to the race of Ahab, *that* was hastening with rapid strides to its doom. The famine which about this time desolated the land, and the new war with the Syrians, which was carried on under the very walls of the capital, was met by the king without any fixed faith, or any determinate rule of conduct; sometimes he attributed his calamities to Elisha, and vowed his destruction; and at others he resorted to that same prophet as to his only friend and deliverer.

In this war the Syrians had laid an ambuscade, in which the king would undoubtedly have perished had not Elisha ensured his safety by discovering the plan of the enemy to him. This happened more than once; and the Syrian king at first suspected treachery in his own camp; but being assured that it was owing to Elisha. "that telleth the king of Israel the words thou speakest in thy bed-chamber," he was much irritated, and, with singular infatuation, despatched a column of his best troops to invest the town of Dothan, where the prophet then abode, in such a manner that his escape seemed impossible to his own terrified servant. "Fear not," said Elisha, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them;" and then, praying that his eyes might be opened to the view of "things invisible to mortal sight," he beheld the mountains full of chariots and horses, glowing like fire, round about the prophet. At his request, the Syrian troop was then smitten with blindness, and in that condition he went among them, and conducted them to the very gates of the hostile metropolis, Samaria, where their eyes were opened, and he dismissed them in peace, after inducing Jehoram to give them refreshment, instead of slaying them, as was his own wish. This generous conduct seems to have had such good effect that the Syrian hordes for the present abandoned their enterprise, and returned to their own country.

After this came on a severe famine, of seven years' continuance, and the evils of it were aggravated by war, for the Syrian king deemed this season of weakness and exhaustion too favourable for his designs to be neglected. He marched directly to Samaria, and formally invested that strong place, which, seemingly, he hoped less to gain by force of arms than by so blockading it as ultimately to starve it into a surrender; which work, he knew, was already more than half accomplished to his hands. The siege was protracted until the inhabitants were driven to the most horrible shifts to prolong their miserable existence. We are

told that an ass's head was sold for eighty silver shekels *, and the fourth part of a cab of vetches † for five shekels ‡. In this case the extremity of the famine is shown not merely by the cost of the articles, but by the fact that the flesh of an ass, for which such an enormous price was now paid, was forbidden by the law §, and could not be touched by a Hebrew under ordinary circumstances.

One day, as the king was passing along the ramparts, two women importunately demanded justice at his hands. They had between them slain, boiled, and eaten the son of one of them, with the understanding that the son of the other was next to be sacrificed to satisfy their wants. But the mother of the living son relented, and refused to yield him to so horrible a fate. This was the injustice of which the mother of the slaughtered child complained, and for which she clamoured for redress. When the king heard this shocking case, he rent his clothes, which gave the people present occasion to observe that his inner dress was the sackcloth of a mourner. He might have remembered that such calamities had been threatened, ages back, by Moses, as the suitable punishment of such iniquities as those into which Israel had actually fallen ‖. His indignation, however, turned against Elisha (who had, perhaps, encouraged him to hold out by promises of deliverance), and he swore that he should lose his head that day, and instantly despatched an officer to execute an intention so worthy of the son of Jezebel. But the messenger was no sooner gone than he relented, and went hastily after him, to revoke the order, and to excuse himself to Elisha. This moment of right feeling was the moment in which deliverance was announced. "Thus saith Jehovah," said the prophet, when the king stood in his presence, "to-morrow about this time shall a seah ¶ of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." This appeared so utterly incredible to the courtier "on whose hand the king leaned," that he said, "Behold, if Jehovah would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" To which the prophet severely retorted, "Behold, *thou* shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

In fact, during the following night, Jehovah caused the Syrians to hear a great noise of chariots and horses, which led them to conclude that Jehoram had contrived to obtain assistance from the king of Egypt and other neighbouring princes; and this infused into them such a panic terror, that they precipitately raised the siege; and, in the belief that they were pursued by a puissant army come to the relief of Israel, they abandoned the camp with all their baggage and provisions. Towards the morning, some lepers, who, as such, abode without the town, made up their minds to go to the camp of the Syrians seeking food; for they concluded that it was better to risk death by the Syrian sword than to die of famine where they were. On reaching the camp they found it deserted, and after satisfying their present wants, and appropriating to their own use some good things from the spoil, they proceeded to bear their glad tidings to the city. The king was slow to believe them, and suspected the whole to be a stratagem of the Syrians. Men were therefore mounted on two of the five only horses now remaining, and sent to make observations. The report with which they returned was quite conformable to that of the lepers. The people then left the city, and hastened to pillage the camp of the Syrians, in which provisions were found in such abundance that a market was established at the gate of Samaria, where, as the prophet had predicted, a seah of wheat was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for the same. The officer who refused to believe this prediction was placed by the

* Equal to 10*l.* of our money.

† The fourth part of a cab was less than a pint of our measure. In the authorised version of the Bible this is rendered "dove's dung," which is indeed the literal translation of the Hebrew. There has been much controversy as to the meaning, and the general opinion of the commentators is, that it means some vegetable production, and most probably some species of vetch.

‡ 12*s.* 6*d.* of our money.

§ No animal food was allowed but that of animals which ruminate *and* divide the hoof. The ass does neither; and was therefore for food more unclean than even the hog, which does divide the hoof although it does not ruminate.

‖ Deut. xxviii. 52—57.

¶ Somewhat more than a peck.

king to preserve order at the gate; but so great was the press of the famishing multitude to obtain corn, that he was thrown down and trodden to death. Thus was accomplished the other prediction, that he should see the truth of the first prophecy without enjoying its benefits.

We know not precisely how long after this the seven years of famine terminated. Of these years the hospitable Shunemite had been warned by Elisha, and had withdrawn to a neighbouring country; on which the state assumed the possession of her lands. After the famine was over, she returned, and came before the king to petition for the restoration of the property. At that time the servant of Elisha was engaged in giving the king an account of the various miracles wrought by his master, and when the woman appeared, he was relating how her son had been restored to life. The relater then said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life." The king was struck by this coincidence, and proceeded to question her on the subject, and ended with directing that not only should the lands be restored to her but the value of their produce during the years of her absence. This was a very becoming act, and, like several other recorded acts of Jehoram, worthy of commendation; but it is not by particular acts, however laudable, that the sins of a criminal life can be covered: and the fulfilment of the doom pronounced upon the house of Ahab was now near at hand.

Jehoram was desirous of pursuing his recent advantage over the Syrians to the extent of taking from them the city of Ramoth in Gilead, which still remained in their possession. Fortified by an alliance with his nephew Ahaziah, king of Judah, he therefore declared war against Hazael, whom a revolution, predicted by Elisha, had placed upon the throne of Damascene-Syria, in the room of Ben-hadad. Ramoth was invested by the two kings; and before that place, where Ahab had received his death-wound, Jehoram was also wounded by an arrow—not mortally, but so seriously that he withdrew to Jezreel to be healed, leaving the conduct of the siege to Jehu, the son of Nimshi. The king of Judah also returned to Jerusalem, but afterwards proceeded to Jezreel to visit his wounded relative.

At this juncture Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophet to execute the commission, long since entrusted to Elijah, of anointing Jehu as king of Israel. He arrived at the time when the chief officers of the army besieging Ramoth were together. He called out Jehu, and anointed him in an inner chamber, delivering at the same time the announcement of his call to the throne of Israel, and to be Jehovah's avenger upon the house of Ahab. No sooner had he done this, than he opened the door and fled. Jehu returned to his companions, as if nothing had happened. But they had noticed the prophetic garb of the person who had called him out, and it being the fashion of those days to speak contemptuously of the prophetic calling, they asked, "Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" Jehu affected some reluctance to tell them; but this made them the more urgent; and when he made the fact known to them, it was so agreeable to their own wishes, that they instantly tendered him their homage, and proclaimed him king by sound of trumpet, and with cries of "Jehu is king!" At his desire, measures were taken to prevent this intelligence from spreading for the present; in consequence of which king Jehoram and king Ahaziah remained at Jezreel, quite unsuspicious of what had occurred. But one day the watchman announced the distant approach of a large party; and the king of Israel sent, successively, two messengers to ascertain whether it came with peaceable designs or not. But as they did not return, and the watchman having in the mean time ascertained from his manner of driving his chariot, that the principal person was Jehu, the two kings went forth themselves to meet him. They met in the fatal field of Naboth. "Is it peace, Jehu?" the king inquired of the general; who answered, "What peace, so long as the whoredoms [idolatries] of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" On hearing which Jehoram cried to the king of Judah, "There is treachery,

O Ahaziah!" and turned his chariot to escape. But Jehu drew his bow with all his force, and the arrow which he discharged smote the king between the shoulders, and went through his heart. Jehu directed the body to be taken from the chariot and left on that ground, reminding Bidkar, his captain, to whom he gave this order, that they were together in attendance upon Ahab in that very place, when the prophet Elijah appeared and denounced that doom upon his house, and the bloody requital in that spot, which was now being accomplished.

Ahaziah also attempted to escape; but Jehu directed some of his followers to pursue and smite him in his chariot. They did so, and wounded him: but he continued his flight till he reached Megiddo, where he died of his wounds. His body was removed to Jerusalem for sepulture*.

Jehu entered Jezreel. The news of what had happened preceded him: and Jezebel tired her head, and painted her eyes, and looked out of a window; and this she did, we should imagine, not with any view of trying the power of her allurements upon Jehu—for she was by this time an aged woman—but for state, and to manifest to the last the pride and royalty of her spirit. As Jehu drew nigh, she called to him, "Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?" But this was the day of vengeance and of punishment, and not of relentings; and Jehu looked up and cried, "Who is on my side, who?" On which two or three eunuchs of the harem looked out to him. "Throw her down!" was the unflinching command of Jehu. So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled upon the wall, and upon the horses that trod upon her. After this, Jehu went into the palace, and ate and drank; and he then said, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter." But it was then found that all the body, except the skull, the feet, and the palms of her hands, had been devoured by such ravenous dogs as those by which eastern cities are still infested. "This," said Jehu, "is the word of Jehovah, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel."

Ahab had left not fewer than seventy sons, and these were all in Samaria, which was not only the metropolis, but one of the strongest places in the kingdom; and Jehu, reflecting, probably, on what happened after the death of Zimri,—when two kings reigned, one, like himself, a military leader upheld by the army, whom a portion of the nation refused to acknowledge, and adhered to another,—apprehended that something similar might again occur. He therefore wrote to the chief persons of Samaria, and to those who had the charge of Ahab's children, to sound their intentions. He told them that they were in a well fortified city, with troops, chariots, and arms; and that, being thus circumstanced, they had better set up one of Ahab's sons for king, and fight for him, letting the crown be the prize of the conqueror. And this, really, was the only course which men faithful and attached to the dynasty of Omri could have taken. This the chief persons and guardians of the princes in Samaria were not,—or not to the extent of risking the consequences of civil war, and of opposition to Jehu. In fact, they were intimidated by his promptitude in action, and at the manner in which the two kings and Jezebel had been disposed of; and there was something calculated to damp their spirits (if they had any) in a message which showed that Jehu was prepared for the most resolute course they could take. They replied,—"We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes." Jehu's reply was prompt, and horribly decisive,—"If ye be for me, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's

* This is the account given in the Book of Kings (2 Kings ix. 27—29); but another account (2 Chron. xxii. 9) says he hid himself in Samaria, where he was discovered and put to death. From this difference it may seem that some circumstances are omitted, by which the two accounts might be reconciled. But, as we do not know with certainty how to reconcile them, we have given one of the accounts only in the text, and have preferred that in Kings solely because it is that which Josephus has followed.

sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time." When this letter arrived the seventy princes were instantly decapitated, and their heads sent in baskets to Jezreel. When Jehu heard of their arrival, he, according to a barbarous eastern custom not yet extinct, directed them to be piled up in two heaps at the entrance of the city-gate until the morning. In the morning he went out to the assembled people, and with the evident design of pointing out the extent to which the house of Ahab wanted any hearty adherents, even among those who might be supposed most attached to its interests, he said,—"Ye be righteous. Behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who hath slain all these? Know now, that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of Jehovah, which Jehovah spake concerning the house of Ahab; for Jehovah hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah."

Jehu delayed not to go to Samaria, and in his way encountered some of the brothers of Ahaziah, the king of Judah, who, ignorant of the late occurrences, were on their way to visit the sons of Ahab. Regarding their connection by blood and friendship with the house of Ahab, Jehu considered them included in his commission to exterminate that house root and branch. He therefore commanded them to be arrested and slain. Their number was forty-two.

In his further progress Jehu met with Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, a pastoral religionist held in high esteem by the people, and whose influence with them was very great. Jehu, with his usual tact, at once felt the advantage which the countenance of this person might be to his cause. He therefore accosted him,—"Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" Jehonadab answered, "It is." "If it be," said Jehu, "give me thine hand." And he gave him his hand, and Jehu took him up into his chariot, saying, "Come with me and see my zeal for Jehovah!" They thus entered Samaria together, where Jehu completed the destruction of the house of Ahab by cutting off all its remaining members.

In Samaria Ahab had erected a celebrated temple to the idol Baal. On entering the town Jehu declared an intention to aggrandise the worship of that god, and render to him higher honours than he had yet received in Israel. He was therefore determined to celebrate a great feast in honour of Baal, to which he convoked all the priests, prophets, and votaries of that idol. The concourse was so great that the temple was filled from one end to another; and while they were in the midst of their idolatrous worship, Jehu sent in a body of armed men who put them all to the sword. The idols, and the implements and ornaments of idol worship, were then overthrown, broken, or reduced to ashes; and the temple itself was demolished, and turned into a common jakes. But the worship of Baal was far from being confined to Samaria, and Jehu sought for it in all quarters of the land, and rooted it out wherever it was found. His conduct in this matter was so well pleasing to God, that the throne of Israel was, by a special promise, assured to his posterity unto the fourth generation.

CONTEMPORARY KINGS.

Kings of Israel.		Kings of Judah.	
Ahab	B.C. 931	Jehoshaphat	B.C. 929
Ahaziah	909		
Jehoram or Joram	907	Jehoram or Joram	904
		Ahaziah	896
Died . . .	895	Died . . .	895

CHAPTER VII.

JUDAH, FROM 929 B.C. TO 725 B.C.

JEHOSHAPHAT, the son of Asa, began to reign over Judah in the year 929 B.C., being the second year of Ahab in Israel. The alliance which he formed with Ahab has brought him forward, in the preceding chapter, sufficiently to intimate to the reader the excellent character which he bore. He indeed takes rank among the most faithful, and *therefore* most illustrious and wise of the Hebrew kings. Direct idolatry had been put down by his father, and the first acts of his own reign were to root out the remoter incentives thereto and instruments thereof. He destroyed the high places and the groves which his father had spared. Other kings before him had been satisfied with external operations; but to his enlightened mind it appeared that effects more deep and permanent might be secured by acting upon the inner sense of the people, by instructing them fully in the principles and distinguishing privileges of their theocratical system, and by rendering those principles operative, as the standards of public and judicial action, throughout the land. The land had already been purged, as by fire, from the noxious weeds by which it had been overgrown; and now the king made it his business to occupy the cleared soil with corn —the staff of life,—and with fruits "pleasant to the eye, and good for food."

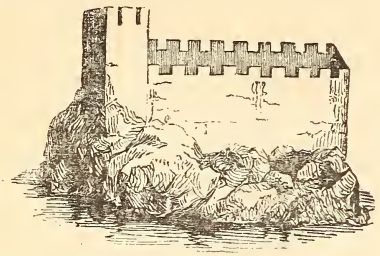
To these ends the king sent out a number of "princes," whose rank and influence secured attention and respect to the priests and Levites who were with them to instruct the people. They had with them copies of the law: and, in their several bands, visited all the towns of the country,—thus bearing instruction to the very doors of a people who had become too indolent or too indifferent themselves to seek for it. So earnest was the king in this object, that he went himself throughout the land to see that his orders were duly executed.

The attention of this able king was also directed to the reform of abuses in other departments of the state, and to the cultivation of the financial and military resources of his kingdom. The people, rendered happy by his cares, grew prosperous, and increased in numbers; in the same degree the real power of the government was strengthened, and was such as inspired the people with confidence, and their enemies with fear. Edom continued firm in its obedience, Philistia regularly remitted its presents and tribute-silver, and several of the Arabian tribes sought his favour, or acknowledged his power, by large yearly tributes of sheep and goats from their flocks. The men enrolled as fit to bear arms, and liable to be called into action, were not less than 1,160,000, which is not far short of the number in the united kingdom in the time of David*. Of these a certain proportion were kept in service. The best of the troops were stationed at Jerusalem, and the remainder distributed into the fortresses and walled towns; and a strong force was concentrated on the northern frontier, especially in those lands of Ephraim which Asa had taken from Baasha. New fortresses were constructed in different parts of the country, and were well garrisoned and supplied with all the munitions of war.

The capital error of this monarch, the alliance he contracted with Ahab in the thirteenth year of his reign, has already been noticed in the preceding chapter, as well as the part he took in the battle of Ramoth Gilead, in which Ahab was slain, but his own life was preserved, notwithstanding the very imminent danger into which he had fallen. On his return to Jerusalem after this escape, the Divine dissatisfaction at his conduct was announced to him by the prophet Jehu.

After this he engaged himself in his former peaceful and honourable under-

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 19.



[Fortress on the Nile.]

takings; and gave particular attention to the administration of justice in his dominions. He established a supreme tribunal (of appeal probably) at Jerusalem, and placed judges in all the principal cities of the country. This great improvement relieved the king from the fatigue and great attention which the exercise of the judicial functions of royalty had exacted from the earlier kings, while it secured to the suitors more prompt attention than they could by any other means receive. The king was very sensible of the importance of this step; and, in his anxiety that it should work well, gave an admirable charge to the judges; the force of which can only be well appreciated by those who perceive that the counteracting evils which he feared were precisely those by which the administration of justice in the East is at this day corrupted and disgraced. —"Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for Jehovah, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts." This was addressed to the judges appointed to the cities. In the address to the judges of the supreme tribunal at Jerusalem, it is not supposed, by any implication, that they could be partial or corrupt; and they are only reminded of the duty of judging according to the Divine law, the causes that came before them. This tribunal was composed of the most distinguished men among the priests, the Levites, and the family chiefs. In matters pertaining to religion, this tribunal was presided over by the high-priest Amariah, but in civil matters, or those in which the crown was interested, by Zebadiah, "the ruler," or hereditary chief, of the tribe of Judah,—an interesting indication that the forms of the patriarchal were not, even yet, entirely lost in those of the regal government.

About the same time the king made another tour through his dominions, from Beersheba in the south, to Mount Ephraim in the north, seeking to bring back the people more entirely "unto Jehovah the God of their fathers." In the northern districts which had been recovered or taken from Israel, the high places of the Ephraimites were not taken away, because they had not as yet "prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers," as had the Judahites, whose high places had been taken away at the beginning of this reign.

The unfortunate expedition with Ahab against Ramoth Gilead being unsuccessful, tended much to lower Jehoshaphat in the estimation of the neighbouring nations; and thus the alliance with the king of Israel brought its own punishment. The Ammonites and Moabites, who had been brought into a state of subjection by David, now began to conceive hopes of deliverance from the yoke under which they lay. It was their policy, however, not in the first instance to revolt from the kingdom to which they were immediately subject—that of Israel, but first to try their strength against the lesser kingdom of Judah. They therefore invaded that country from the south, by the way of Edom, supported by some Arabian hordes, which they had engaged in their cause, and who indeed are seldom loth to engage in any cause by which good prospects of spoil are offered. The expedition assumed the character of an Arabian invasion, and, as such, was so expeditious that the invaders had rounded the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and came to a halt in the famous valley of Engedi, before Jehoshaphat had the least intimation of their design. Taken thus by surprise, he was much alarmed in the first instance; but by throwing himself unreservedly upon the protection and help of the Divine king, he ensured the safety of his kingdom, and took the most becoming step which it was possible that a king of the

chosen nation could take. He proclaimed a general fast throughout Judah, and the people gathered together from all quarters to Jerusalem, and stood there in and around the temple, to cry to God for help. And he heard them: for the spirit of prophecy fell upon one of the Levites, named Jahaziel, and in the name of Jehovah he directed that they should march to meet the enemy, whose station he indicated, not to fight, but to witness their extirpation and to seize the spoil. As they went forth early in the morning towards the wilderness of Tekoah, Jehoshaphat exerted himself to keep up the confidence of the people in the sufficiency of the Divine protection; and as they proceeded, he directed that the Levitical singers should march in front, and in "the beauty of holiness" (or in the same habits, and after the same manner as in the temple-service), should sing the praises of God, saying, "Praise Jehovah! for his mercy endureth for ever." Surely never, from the beginning of the world, was there such a march as this against an army of hostile invaders. The event was such as the prophet had foreshown. It seems that the children of Lot had quarrelled and fought with their Arabian allies; and when they had succeeded in destroying them, they turned their arms against each other, and fought with unextinguishable fury until none remained alive on the battle-field. So that when the Hebrews arrived at the place which the prophet had indicated, many a beating heart among them was relieved, and all were inconceivably astonished, to see the wilderness covered with the bodies of the slain—not one had escaped. The Judahites were three days in collecting an immense spoil of precious metals and stones, and valuable arms and raiment; and in the end it was found that more was collected than could be taken away. On the fourth day they returned home to Jerusalem, before entering which they held a solemn thanksgiving in the valley of Shaveh, or the King's Dale, hence called the Valley of Berachah (*blessing*), and also the valley of Jehoshaphat. After this they entered the city in triumphal procession, with music and with singing. The neighbouring nations rightly ascribed this signal deliverance to the God of the Hebrews; and were for some time inspired with a salutary fear of molesting a people so highly favoured.

The next undertaking of Jehoshaphat was an attempt to revive the ancient traffic of Solomon, by the Red Sea, to the region of gold. For this purpose he built a navy at his port of Ezion-geber, at the head of the Elanitic Gulf. But, in an evil day, he consented to allow Ahaziah, the king of Israel, to take part in the enterprise, in consequence of which, as a prophet forewarned him, his ships were wrecked soon after they left the port. Another expedition was proposed by the king of Israel: but Jehoshaphat declined, and appears to have relinquished all further designs of this nature. Josephus informs us that the ships which had been built were too large and unwieldy; and we may infer that Jehoshaphat discovered that he could not accomplish an enterprise of this nature in the want of such skilful shipwrights and able mariners as those with which the Phœnicians had constructed and manned the ships of Solomon.

One of the last public acts of Jehoshaphat's reign was that of taking part with Jehoram, king of Israel, in an expedition against the Moabites, who had revolted after the death of Ahab. Jehoshaphat was probably the more induced to lend his assistance by the consideration of the recent invasion of his own dominions by the same people. The circumstances and result of this expedition have been related in the preceding chapter. The success which was granted to it is entirely ascribed to the Divine favour towards the king of Judah.

Soon after this Jehoshaphat "slept with his fathers," after he had lived sixty years, and reigned twenty-five.

His eldest son, JEHORAM, ascended the throne of Judah in the year 904 B.C., in the thirty-second year of his own age, and in the third year of the reign of his namesake and relative, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, in Israel. This, it will be remembered, was the prince who was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The evil effects of

this connection began now very manifestly to appear, and preponderated over the good example which the reign of Jehoshaphat had offered. In fact, Athaliah proved her descent by rivalling her mother, Jezebel, in idolatry, in pride, and in the part she took in public affairs after the death of Jehoshaphat. And, to complete the resemblance, she appears to have rendered her husband the mere instrument of her will and purposes, quite as effectually as Jezebel rendered Ahab.

It was undoubtedly through her influence that the first act of Jehoram's reign was to destroy his six brothers, whom Jehoshaphat had amply provided for, and stationed (as governors, probably) in as many fenced cities of Judah. With them perished several of the first persons in the state, who had enjoyed the confidence of the late king, and had been active in promoting his laudable designs. This evidence of her power redoubled the audacity of the proud queen; and soon after, idolatry, which had been banished from Judah during the two preceding reigns, was restored, by public authority, to honour; and the sedulous endeavours made in the two former reigns to reform the religion and morals of the people gave place to the efforts of new men to corrupt and ruin all. High places, similar to those in Israel, again appeared upon the hills of Judah; and the people were seduced and urged into idolatry and its concomitant abominations.

For these things heavy calamities were denounced against Jehoram, early in his reign, by the prophet Elisha* in a letter: and thus did that great prophet take cognizance of the affairs of Judah also. The evils that he threatened followed soon.

The king of Edom, who assisted the kings of Judah and Israel in the war against Moab, had, according to Josephus, been slain by the revolted subjects, and the new sovereign desired to signalise his accession, and to propitiate his subjects, by freeing them from the tribute to which his father had submitted. This essay was not at first successful; but although once defeated by Jehoram, who still had his father's army under his command, the Edomites succeeded in throwing the yoke of Judah from off their necks, according to the prophecy of Isaac to the founder of that nation†. Emboldened by this, the Philistines also rebelled, and, assisted by the Arabs who bordered on the Cushites, they invaded Judah, plundered and ravaged the whole country, and even Jerusalem and the royal palace. They led away into slavery all the women of the king's harem, except Athaliah, who was spared in anger, and made captive all the royal princes, except Ahaziah, otherwise called Jehoahaz, the youngest of them all. To consummate all, the king himself was smitten with an incurable disease in the bowels, from which he suffered for two years the most horrible torments, and at last, after a reign of eight years, died without being regretted. The voice of the people denied to his remains the honours of a royal burial and a place in the sepulchre of the kings.

AHAZIAH, his youngest son, was forty-two years old when he succeeded his father. He reigned only one year; for, following the evil counsels of his mother and the house of Ahab, he foolishly joined Jehoram of Israel in the war against Hazael king of Syria, the result of which, with his death, inflicted by Jehu, has been recorded in the preceding chapter.

Not Jehu in Israel thirsted more after the blood of Ahab's house, than did Athaliah, in Judah, for the blood of her own children. She had long been the virtual possessor of the supreme power in Judah; but now she disdained an authority so precarious and indirect, and would reign alone. As even the most wicked persons seldom shed blood from absolute wantonness of cruelty, it may be considered that her spirit may have been rendered unusually savage at this time by the sanguinary proceedings of Jehu in Israel against the house to which she herself be-

* The Masorete text here reads *E'ijah* (2 Chron. xxi. 12) instead of *Elisha*: for Elijah had been translated in the time of Jehoshaphat. 2 Kings, iii. 11.

† To Esau Isaac said,—"Thou shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." Gen. xxvii. 40. See also p. 61 of this

longed, and in which she had lost, at one fell swoop, a mother, a brother, and a son, with many other of her near relatives. It must also have appeared to her that the sort of authority she had hitherto exercised, first as queen-consort and then as queen-mother, was now in very great danger; as it might be expected that whichever of her grandsons succeeded to the throne, he would prefer the counsels and guidance of his mother to her own. Here then were two powerful motives, —dread of losing her power, and jealousy of being superseded by another woman,— bringing her to the atrocious resolution of destroying all the children of her own son Ahaziah. She little considered that by this she was fulfilling a part of the mission against the house of Ahab which Jehu himself could not execute; for through herself the taint of Ahab's blood had been given to the house of David. Her fell purpose was promptly executed. All her grandsons were slain in one day, with the exception of Joash, an infant, who was stolen away by his aunt Jehoshebad, the wife of the high-priest Jehoiada and daughter of the late king Ahaziah, and hidden with his nurse in one of the chambers of the temple. Thus, in the providence of God, the royal line of the house of David was preserved from utter extinction. No retreat could have been more secure than that which was chosen for the infant prince; for not only were the apartments of the temple under the sole direction of the priests, but no others had access to the innermost parts of it; and Athaliah had put herself out of the way of obtaining information of the fact, by her entire neglect of the temple and the institutions connected with it. And although she did not, indeed could not, actually put down the temple-worship, her preference and favour was given to the temple of Baal; and his high-priest, Mattan, was upheld by her as of equal rank and importance with the high-priest of Jehovah.

Now, although the Judahites were but too prone to fall into idolatry, the good effects of the reforms of Asa and Jehoshaphat, and of the principles which the latter had been so careful to inculcate, did not so soon evaporate as to dispose the people generally to approve or concur in the rapid and decisive measures which Athaliah had taken in establishing the worship of Baal; and when to this was added their natural abhorrence of the barbarous massacre which rooted her throne in blood, and their dislike, in common with all orientals, to the public rule of a woman, we have a sufficient explanation of the fact that the public feeling was not with queen Athaliah, and that, indeed, her rule was regarded with such disgust as disposed the people to hail with joy the advent of their hidden king.

Joash remained six years concealed in the secret chambers of the temple, his existence even, much more his presence there, being unknown and unsuspected by Athaliah and others, as it was supposed he had perished in the slaughter of his father's sons. In the seventh year the high-priest Jehoiada judged that the fit time had arrived for the disclosure. He therefore made known the secret to some of the chiefs and military commanders on whom he could depend, and received from them the promise to concur in the bold act of proclaiming and crowning the rightful king. Joash was now only seven years of age; but good reason was seen to prefer the regency of such a man as Jehoiada to the reign of such a woman as Athaliah. The persons whom Jehoiada had admitted to his confidence went about the country gaining over the paternal chiefs, and inducing them, as well as the Levites not on duty, to repair to Jerusalem. When all the adherents thus acquired had come to the metropolis, the high-priest concerted with them the plan of operations. According to this it was determined that the partisans of the young prince should be divided into three bodies, one of which was to guard the prince in the temple, the second to keep all the avenues, and the third was placed at the gate leading to the royal palace. The people were to be admitted as usual to the outer courts. Then the armories of the temple were opened, and the spears, bucklers, and shields of king David were distributed to these parties, as well as to the Levites, who were to form an impenetrable barrier around the king during the

ceremony. When all was disposed in this order, the high-priest appeared, leading by the hand the last scion of the royal house of David. He placed him by the pillar where the kings were usually stationed, and having anointed him with the sacred oil, he placed the crown upon his head, arrayed him in royal robes, and gave into his hands the book of the law, on which the usual oaths were administered to him. He was then seated on a throne which had been provided, in doing which he was hailed and recognised by the acclamations of "God save the king."

By this time Athaliah had observed some indications of an extraordinary movement in the temple; and when these rejoicing clamours broke upon her ear, she hastened thither, and penetrated even to the court of the priests, where the sight met her view of the enthroned boy, crowned, and royally arrayed, while the hereditary chiefs, the military commanders and the Levites, stood at their several stations as in attendance on their king,—the latter, as was their wont in the temple, blowing their trumpets, and playing on their various instruments of music. No sooner did Athaliah behold this, than she rent her clothes, crying, "Treason! treason!" Jehoiada fearing that the guards would kill her on the spot, and thus pollute the holy place with human blood, which was most abhorrent to God, directed them to take her outside the temple courts, and there she was put to death. The king was then conducted with great pomp to the palace, escorted by all his guard, and there took possession of the throne of his fathers.

Jehoiada, without any formal appointment, appears to have been recognised, with one consent, as the guardian of the king and regent of the kingdom. He availed himself of the favourable dispositions which now existed, to induce the people to renew their ancient covenant with Jehovah. This precaution had become necessary from the long continuance of an idolatrous government. Actuated by the impulse thus received and the enthusiasm thus excited, and led by the priests and Levites of Jehovah, the people proceeded once more to extirpate the idolatries of Baal. They hastened to his temple, where they slew the high-priest Mattan before the altars, and then pulled the whole fabric to the ground. And not only at Jerusalem, but everywhere throughout the land, the temples, altars and monuments of Baal were utterly destroyed.

Jehoiada, being now at the head of affairs, both religious and civil, applied himself with great diligence in bringing into an orderly and efficient condition the administrations of both the court and temple. Those who had signalised their zeal in the restoration of the king, or were otherwise distinguished for their abilities, were appointed to high posts in the state; while the services of the temple were brought back to the models of David and Solomon. The glory of restoring the fabric of the temple he reserved for the king, who, accordingly, in the twenty-third year of his reign, thoroughly repaired that famous structure, after it had been built nearly one hundred and sixty years; and made numerous vessels of gold and silver for the sacred services, and presented burnt-offerings continually during the lifetime of Jehoiada, who died at the great age of one hundred and thirty-seven years. He was honoured with a sepulchre among the kings of the family of David, "because he had done good in Israel."

We may estimate the merits of Jehoiada's administration from the evil consequences that followed his death. It then appeared that the good qualities, which the king had seemed to manifest, were the effects rather of the right counsels under which he had acted, than of any solid principles of good. As we have before seen stronger and older men than Joash yielding to the witcheries of idolatry, which seem so strange to us, we are the less surprised at the fall of this king. It now appeared what deep root idolatry had taken in the land during the years of its predominance under Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah: and the men of station who had imbibed or had been brought up in its principles now reared themselves on high, as soon as the repressive power of God's high-priest was withdrawn. They repaired to the royal court, and by their attentions and flatteries so won upon the king that he was at length

induced to give first his tolerance, and then his sanction, to the rank idolatries by which the two kingdoms had often been brought very low. Against this, Zechariah, the son of the late high-priest and a near relation to the king, raised his voice, and predicted the national calamities which would too surely follow; on which the people rose upon him, and, having received a consenting intimation from the king, stoned him to death in the very court of the temple. Thus did Joash repay the deep obligations, for his life and throne, which he owed to the house of Jehoiada. "The Lord look upon it, and require it!" was the prayer of the dying martyr. And HE did require it. That very year, Hazael of Syria, who was then in possession of Gilead, advanced against Jerusalem, and although his force was but small, defeated a large army which opposed him, and entered the city, from which he returned with abundant plunder to his own country. The chiefs who had seduced Joash were slain in the battle; and the king himself, who had been grievously wounded, was soon after murdered by his own servants; and the public voice refused the honours of a royal burial to his remains. He reigned forty years.

Joash was succeeded on the throne by his son AMAZIAH, then twenty-five years of age. The first act of his reign was to punish the murderers of his father: but it is mentioned that he respected the law of Moses by not including their children in their doom; and this seems to show that a contrary practice had previously prevailed.

About the twelfth year of his reign, Amaziah took measures for reducing to their former subjection the Edomites, who had revolted in the time of Jehoram. Not satisfied with the strength he could raise in his own kingdom, the king of Judah hired a hundred thousand auxiliaries out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver*. But these were tainted with idolatry; on which account a prophet was commissioned to exhort Amaziah to forego their assistance, and dismiss them. By a memorable act of faith, the king at once yielded to this hard demand, and sent home the Israelites, for whose services he had already paid. He then gained a decisive victory over the Edomites in the Salt Valley, at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. Ten thousand of the Edomites fell; and ten thousand more were cast down from the cliffs of their native mountains, and dashed in pieces.

This victory was the ruin of Amaziah, whose conduct had been hitherto praiseworthy. The idols of Edom, which he brought home among the spoil, proved a snare to him; and, in the end he fell to the worship of "the gods which could not deliver their own people:" for which he was, without effect, upbraided by a prophet, and threatened with destructions from God.

The Israelites whom the king of Judah had dismissed from his army were filled with resentment at the indignity cast upon them; and probably disappointed in their hope of a share in the spoils of Edom. To testify their resentment, and to obtain compensation, they smote and plundered several of the towns of Judah, on their homeward march, and destroyed many of the inhabitants. It was probably on this account that Amaziah, elated by his victory over the Edomites, determined to make war upon Israel. It is singular that, instead of commencing, as usual, by some aggressive movement or overt act of warfare, Amaziah sent a formal challenge to the king of Israel, inviting a pitched battle, in the phrase, "Come, and let us look one another in the face." The truly Oriental answer of Joash seemed designed to dissuade him from this undertaking, but was conceived in terms not well calculated to accomplish the object: "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son to wife:' and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou sayest, 'Lo! thou hast smitten the Edomites,' and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast. Abide now at home; why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt, so that thou shouldst fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?"

But Amaziah was not to be thus deterred. The two kings met in battle. Amaziah was

* About 37,500*l.*

defeated and taken prisoner, and his army routed at Beth-shemesh. Joash then pursued his triumphant march to Jerusalem, which he plundered, and spared not to lay his hands upon the sacred things of the Temple. He also broke down four hundred cubits of the city wall. He, however, restored Amaziah to his throne, but took hostages with him on his return to Samaria.

The life of Amaziah ended in a conspiracy, which may have been induced by the disgrace which he had brought upon the nation. This conspiracy was discovered by him, and he hastened to the fortified town of Lachish. But he was pursued and slain by the conspirators, who brought back his body "upon horses" to Jerusalem, where a place in the sepulchres of his fathers was not denied him. He reigned twenty-nine years. B.C. 809.

Uzziah, otherwise called Azariah, was only five years old when his father was slain. The Judahites were in no haste to tender their allegiance to an infant. They waited until he was sixteen years of age, and he was then formally called to the throne*. Much favourable influence upon the character of Uzziah is attributed to the early instruction and subsequent influence of the wise and holy Zechariah†. His adhesion to the principles of the theocracy secured him prosperity and honour. He paid equal attention to the arts of peace and of war; and he throve in all the undertakings, whether of war or peace, to which he put his hand. In the arts which belong to both, he encouraged and promoted various improvements; and it may be pardoned in an oriental king, if, in his improvements and undertakings, his own interest and glory was the inciting motive. It is rare, and in fact difficult, for an oriental monarch (considering the institutions by which he is surrounded, and the ideas which press upon him) to contemplate the interests of his people otherwise than as a contingent effect of undertakings in which *his own* interests and glory are the *primary* motives. So Uzziah performed the good deed of building towers and digging wells in the desert; but the reason immediately follows:—"*For* he had much cattle both in the low countries and in the plains." He also "loved husbandry;" and, accordingly, "*he* had husbandmen also, and vine-dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel." These were laudable things; for the people could not but be benefited by them, even though their benefit were less the immediate intention than the indirect effect.

The same may even less doubtfully be said of this king's military organizations and improvements. New fortifications were built and the old repaired. At Jerusalem not only were the injuries which the walls had sustained repaired, but the gates and angles were strengthened with towers; and on these were mounted engines invented by skilful men, and made under the king's encouragement and direction, for the purpose of discharging arrows and great stones. It may be doubtful whether these engines were invented by Hebrew engineers, or successfully copied by them from foreigners. We have certainly no opinion that the Hebrews had much genius for mechanical invention; but we are bound to say the antiquities of Egypt, in the numerous warlike scenes which they represent, do not, as far as we know, contain any examples of projectile engines: and it must be admitted that *in the art of war* many ingenious devices originate with nations not otherwise distinguished for their inventive faculties.

Uzziah provided ample stores of weapons and armour—spears, shields, helmets, breastplates, bows, and stone-slings—for the numerous body which he enrolled as ready to be called into action, and which consisted of not less than 307,500 men under 2600 paternal chiefs. This formed a sort of militia, divided into bands, liable to be called into actual service by rotation, according to the number required.

* "This naturally accounts for the length of the interregnum. (2 Kings xv. 1, 2; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1.) Amaziah was slain fifteen years current after the death of Jehoash, king of Israel (2 Kings xiv. 17), or fourteen years complete from the accession of Jeroboam II. his son; and Azariah, or Uzziah, did not begin to reign till the twenty-fifth of Jeroboam (according to the foregoing correction, instead of the twenty-seventh year), 2 Kings xv. 1, which gives the length of the interregnum eleven years complete."—HALES.

† No one will, of course, confound this person with the prophet of the same name, who lived long after.

With this force, and under these arrangements, Uzziah was enabled to establish and extend his power. He recovered possession of the port of Elath on the Red Sea; he got possession of the principal Philistine towns, Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. The Arab hordes on the borders were subdued; and the Ammonites were reduced to tribute.

Elated by all this prosperity, the king of Judah saw not why he should be precluded from a distinction which other monarchs enjoyed, and which his neighbour of Israel probably exercised—that of officiating on particular occasions at the incense-altar, as high-priest. He made the attempt. He went into the holy place, which none but the priests might lawfully enter, to offer incense on the altar there; but was followed by the high-priest, Azariah, and by eighty other priests, who opposed his design, and warned him of his trespass. The king, made wrathful by this opposition, seized the censer to offer incense; but in that moment he was smitten with leprosy, the marks of which appeared visibly on his forehead. On perceiving this, the priests thrust him forth as a pollution; nay, confounded and conscience-smitten, he hastened to leave the place*. From that day he was obliged to live apart as a leper, and his son Jotham administered the affairs of the government in his father's name. The year in which this happened is not well determined; but the whole duration of his reign was fifty-two years. This is the longest reign of any king of Judah, with the sole exception of Manasseh. Isaiah received his appointment to the prophetic office in the year that king Uzziah died [B.C. 757]; and Amos, Hosea, and probably Joel, began to prophesy in his reign.

The death of Uzziah left the kingdom under the same actual ruler, but exchanged his regency for the sovereignty. Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign. He was a good and prosperous prince, and during the sixteen years of his separate reign continued the improvements and plans of his father. He built several fortresses, and confirmed the subjection of the Ammonites to his sceptre. It was in this reign† that the city of Rome was founded, with the destinies of which the Hebrews were in the end to be so intimately connected. Jotham died in the year B.C. 741.

Ahaz succeeded Jotham when he was twenty years of age. He proved the most corrupt monarch that the house of David had as yet produced. He respected neither Jehovah, the law, nor the prophets; he broke through all the salutary restraints which law and usage imposed upon the Hebrew kings, and regarded nothing but his own depraved inclinations. He introduced the Syrian idolatry into Jerusalem, erected altars to the Syrian gods, altered the temple in many respects, according to the Syrian model, and finally caused it to be entirely shut up. For these things, adversities and punishments soon came upon him.

Pekah king of Israel, and Rezin king of Syria, had formed an alliance against Judah in the last year of Jotham, which began to take effect as soon as Ahaz had evinced the unworthiness of his character. The object of this alliance appears to have been no less than to dethrone the house of David, and to make "the son of Tabeal" king in the room of Ahaz‡.

In this war Elath was taken from Judah by the king of Syria, who restored it to the Edomites. He also defeated Ahaz in battle, and carried away large numbers of his subjects as captives to Damascus. Pekah on his part was equally successful. He slew in one day 120,000 men of Judah, and carried away captives not fewer than 200,000 women and children, together with much spoil, to Samaria. But on his arrival there he was met by the prophet Obed, and by some of the chiefs of Ephraim. The former awakened the king's apprehensions for the consequences of the Divine anger on account of the evil

* To this prodigy Josephus adds an earthquake, which, he says, shook the earth with such violence that the roof of the temple was rent; and one half of a mountain on the west of Jerusalem fell, or rather slipped, into the valley below, covering the royal gardens.

† B.C. 748, or according to others, 750 or 752, all which dates fell in this reign.

‡ Isa. vii. 5. 6. Of this "son of Tabeal" nothing is known, although much has been conjectured. Some make it to be Pekah himself, but the interpretation on which it is founded is not very sound, although the thing itself might not be unlikely.

already committed against the house of Judah, and exhorted him not to add to this evil and to their danger, by reducing the women and children of that kindred state to bondage. The prophet was vigorously seconded by the chiefs, who positively declared to the troops, "ye *shall not* bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against Jehovah already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." On hearing this the warriors abandoned their captives, and left them in the hands of the chiefs, who, with the concurrence and help of the people, "took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to their brethren." This beautiful incident comes over our sense as might some strain of soft and happy music amidst the bray of trumpets and the alarms of war. It also proves that, even in the worst of times, a righteous few were found, even in Israel, who honoured the God of their fathers and stood in dread of his judgments.

The narrative in Isaiah records an unsuccessful attempt of the confederates against Jerusalem, the proper place of which in the history is not easily found, but which may appear to have been posterior to the occurrences which have been related. At the same time, the Edomites and the Philistines invaded the south of Judah, and took possession of several cities of the low country, with their villages, and occupied them. Thus harassed on every hand, the besotted king rejected a token of deliverance which Isaiah was commissioned to offer him from God, under the pretext that he "would not tempt Jehovah," but in reality, because he had already chosen another alternative. This was to induce Tiglath-Pileser*, the king of Assyria, to make a diversion in his favour, by invading the kingdoms of Syria and Israel.

Pul, the father of this king, was the first Assyrian monarch who took part in the affairs of the West. By invading Israel, he had made known the power of that monarchy to Syria and Palestine. Tiglath-Pileser, for his own objects, lent a willing ear to the suite of Ahaz, who professed himself his vassal, and sent him a subsidy of all the sacred and royal treasures. He marched an army westward, defeated and slew Rezin the king of Syria, took Damascus, and sent the inhabitants away into Assyria,—thus putting an end to that monarchy of Damascene-Syria, which has so often come under our notice. At the same time he carried away the tribes beyond Jordan—Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh—captives to Media, where they were planted in Halah, Habor, and on the river Gozan; and to them he added the other half of the tribe of Manasseh which was seated in Galilee.

Syria, with the countries of Gilead and Bashan, were thus annexed to the dominions of the Assyrian king, who remained some time at Damascus, settling his conquests. Ahaz had small cause to rejoice in this alteration, for although he was delivered from his immediate fears, the formidable Assyrian had now become his near neighbour, and was not likely to treat him with much consideration; and in fact the result was that he "distressed him, but strengthened him not." The king of Judah, however, found it prudent to visit Tiglath-Pileser at Damascus, to congratulate him on his victories, and to tender his homage. This visit only taught him new fashions of idolatry and sin; which on his return home he continued to practise apparently until his death, which took place in B.C. 725, after a disgraceful reign of sixteen years. He was allowed a grave in Jerusalem; but no place in the sepulchre of the kings was granted to him.

* Or *Tiglath pul-assur*, "the tiger lord of Assyria."

CONTEMPORARY KINGS.

Kings of Judah.		Kings of Israel.	
Q. Athaliah	B.C. 895	Jehu	B.C. 895
Joash or Jehoash	889	Jehoahaz	867
Amaziah	849	Jehoash or Joash	850
Interregnum	820	Jeroboam II.	834
Uzziah or Azariah	809		
——	——	First Interregnum	793
——	——	Zachariah and Shallum	771
——	——	Menahem	770
——	——	Pekahiah	760
Jotham	757	Pekah	758
Ahaz	741	——	——
——	——	Second Interregnum	738
		Hoshea	728
Died	725	Samaria taken . . .	719

CHAPTER VIII.

ISRAEL, FROM 895 B.C. TO 719 B.C.

JEHU, having executed his avenging mission upon the house of Ahab, and overthrown the idolatries of Baal, ascended the throne of Israel in the year 895 B.C.

There was a point beyond which Jehu was not prepared to go in his boasted zeal for Jehovah. He was ready to punish and discountenance all foreign worship; but it was no part of his policy to heal the schism between Judah and Israel, by abolishing the separate and highly irregular establishment for the worship of Jehovah, before the symbolic golden calves, which Jeroboam had established, and which all his successors had maintained. The vital root therefore remained in the ground, although the branches had been lopped off. It also appeared, ere long, that the foreign idolatries of Ahab and Jezebel had acquired too much prevalence to be entirely extirpated by any coercive reformation. As soon as the heat of that reformation had cooled, such idolatries again gradually stole into use, although no longer with the sanction or favour of the government.

For these things the kingdom of Israel was in the latter days of Jehu allowed to be shorn of the provinces beyond Jordan. That fair country was ravaged, and its fortresses seized by Hazael, king of Syria, who, without any recorded opposition from the king of Israel, appears to have annexed it to his own dominions.

Jehu died in 867 B.C., after a reign of twenty-eight years.

He was succeeded by his son JEHOAHAZ, who reigned seventeen inglorious years. He followed the latter course of his father, and the people followed their own course. The same kind of punishment was therefore continued. The Syrians were still permitted to prevail over Israel, until, at length, Jehoahaz had only left, of all his forces, ten chariots, fifty horsemen, and ten thousand infantry; for "the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like dust by threshing."

By these calamities the king was at last awakened to a sense of his position and his danger: he made supplication to Jehovah with tears; and therefore his latter days were favoured with peace. He died in 850 B.C.

JOASH, his son, began to reign in the thirty-seventh year of his namesake, Joash king of Judah. Josephus gives this king a good character, which the sacred historian does not confirm. From looking at the few incidents of his life which it has been deemed worth while to preserve, we may reconcile these statements by discovering that he was in his private character a well-disposed, although weak, man; while as a king he made no efforts to discourage idolatry or heal the schism which the establishment of the golden calves had produced. In his days Elisha the prophet fell sick of that illness of which he died. When the king heard of his danger, he went to visit his dying bed, and wept over him, crying, "O my father! my father!—the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" As the idolatrous generation was now becoming extinct, and the good dispositions of Joash himself were recognised, the dying prophet was enabled to assure him, by a significant symbol, of three victories over the Syrians. Accordingly, Joash was enabled to keep them in check, and in the end to gain the ascendancy over them, so as to recover from Ben-hadad the possessions of which his own father had been deprived by the father of that Syrian king.

Joash reigned seventeen years.

In the year 834 B.C., JEROBOAM II. succeeded his father, whom he appears to have much resembled in character and proceedings. He began badly; and Josephus says that he engaged in various absurd foreign undertakings which proved very injurious to the nation. He was probably improved by ripening years; for the prophet Jonah was commissioned to promise him the complete recovery of the former dominions of the state. A great victory over the Syrians accordingly restored to him all the ancient divisions of Israel, from Hamath to the borders of the Dead Sea. His signal success over Amaziah the king of Judah has been recorded in the preceding chapter. Upon the whole, the reign of Jeroboam II. may be regarded as a brilliant one, considering the evil days on which the history has now fallen. In fact, it would not be easy to point to any king of the separate kingdom of Israel whose reign was more prosperous.

The prophet Jonah, named in the preceding paragraph, is the same whose reluctant mission to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, is related in the book which bears his name. "The king of Nineveh," whose humiliation with that of his people averted the doom impending over "that exceeding great city," is supposed to have been the predecessor of Pul, whom the history will speedily bring before us. Jonah's remarkable mission appears to have taken place about the year 800 B.C., at the latter end of the reign of Jeroboam, who died in 793 B.C., after a reign of forty-one years.

There was a delay in calling his son ZACHARIAH to the throne. Jeroboam II. began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, and reigned forty-one years*; he died, therefore, in the sixteenth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; but his son Zachariah did not succeed him until the thirty-eighth of Uzziah†, which produces an interregnum of not less than twenty-two years. During this period great internal commotions prevailed, which more than compensated the absence of foreign war. Kings were suddenly raised to the throne, and as suddenly removed, agreeably to the representation which the prophet Hosea gives of the state of the kingdom. The same representation also proves that at this period very gross corruptions of religion and of morals prevailed. Even the ultimate call of Zachariah to the throne had scarcely any effect in allaying these disturbances, and he was himself slain by Shallum in the sixth month of his reign. He was the last king of the house of Jehu: and thus was fulfilled the prediction that the family of Jehu should only retain the throne to the fourth generation.

SHALLUM, whose deed in slaying Zachariah was performed with the sanction and in the

* 2 Kings xiv. 23. † 2 Kings xv. 8.

presence of the people, ascended the vacant throne in the year 771 B.C. But on receiving intelligence of this event, MENAHEM, the general of the army, marched against the new king, and having defeated and slain him in battle, after a reign of but thirty days, mounted the throne himself; and, through his influence with the army, he was enabled not only to retain his post, but to subdue the disturbances by which the country had of late years been distracted. In doing this he proceeded with a degree of barbarity which would have been scarcely excusable in even a foreign conqueror*.

It was in the time of Menahem that the Assyrians under Pul made their first appearance in Syria. Their formidable force precluded even the show of opposition from the king of Israel, who deemed it the wiser course to purchase peace from the Assyrian king at the price of a thousand talents of silver†. This sum he raised by the unpopular measure of a poll tax of fifty shekels each‡ upon 60,000 of his wealthiest subjects. This is the first instance in either kingdom of money raised by taxation for a public object. In the kingdom of Judah such exigencies were met from the treasury of the temple, or of the crown; and probably there were, in ordinary times, analogous resources in Israel, but which we may readily conclude to have been exhausted in the recent troubles and confusions in that kingdom. Professor Jahn considers that the government of Israel had by this time become wholly military, in which conclusion we are disposed to acquiesce, although from other intimations than those to which he adverts.

After a reign of ten years Menahem died in 760 B.C., and was succeeded by his son PEKAHIAH, who, after a short and undistinguished reign of two years, was slain by PEKAH, the commander of the forces, who placed himself on the throne.

The alliance of Pekah with Reziz the king of Syria, against the house of David, has been recorded in the preceding chapter, as well as the consequences which resulted from the resort of Ahaz, king of Judah, to the protection of Tiglath-pileser, the new king of Assyria, who overran Gilead and Galilee, and removed the inhabitants to Assyria and Media. After a reign of twenty years, Pekah received from Hosea the same doom which he had himself inflicted upon his predecessor. This was in 738 B.C., being in the third year of the reign of Ahaz in Judah.

It appears that although Hosea is counted as the next king, he was not immediately able to establish himself on the throne, but that an interregnum, or period of anarchy, of ten years' duration, followed the murder of Pekah§. Thus, although the kingdom of Israel was now enclosed within very narrow boundaries, and surrounded on the north and east by the powerful Assyrians, it could not remain quiet, but was continually exhausting its strength in domestic conspiracies and broils.

From this struggle the regicide HOSEA emerged as king. He proved a better ruler than most of his predecessors. He allowed the king of Judah (Hezekiah) to send messengers through the country inviting the people to a great passover, which he intended to celebrate at Jerusalem, nor did he throw any obstacles in the way of the persons disposed to accept the invitation. He had a spirit which might have enabled him to advance the power and interests of the country, under ordinary circumstances; but now, doomed of God, the kingdom was too much weakened to make the least effort against the Assyrian power. When therefore Shalmaneser, the new Assyrian king, invaded the country, he bowed his neck to receive the yoke of a tributary. This yoke, however, he found so galling, that ere long he took measures for shaking it off. He made a treaty with "So," or Sabaco||, king of Egypt,

* Joseph. 'Antiq.' ix. 11, § 1.

† Almost 375,000*l.* by the present value of this quantity of silver.

‡ Six pounds five shillings sterling.

§ "Pekah, king of Israel, began to reign in the fifty-second year of Uzziah (2 Kings xv. 27; 2 Chron. xxvi. 3); and in the twentieth year of his reign was slain by Hoshea (xv. 30), in the third year of the reign of Ahaz king of Judah (2 Kings xvi. 1); but Hoshea did not begin to reign until the twelfth year of Ahaz (xvii. 1), or the thirteenth current (2 Kings xvi. 10); consequently the second interregnum in Israel lasted 13−3=10 years.—HALES.

|| This So, or Sabaco of profane authors,—Sabakoph on the monuments,—was an Ethiopian who ruled in Egypt,

and on the strength of it ventured to seize and imprison the Assyrian officer appointed to collect the tribute. Upon this, Shalmaneser laid siege to Samaria, and after three years gained possession of that city and destroyed it. During all this time the king of Egypt made no attempt to come to the assistance of Israel, as Isaiah had from the beginning predicted, in language of strong reprehension, against this alliance*. The fall of Samaria consummated the conquest of the country by the Assyrians. Hosea was himself among the captives, and was sent in chains to Nineveh; but what afterwards became of him is not known. Considerable numbers of the principal Israelites, during the war, and at its disastrous conclusion, fled the country, some to Egypt, but more into Judea, where they settled down as subjects of Hezekiah, whose kingdom must have been considerably strengthened by this means.

According to a piece of Oriental policy of which modern examples have been offered, Shalmaneser removed from the land the principal inhabitants, the soldiers, and the artisans to Halab, to the river Habor (Chebar in Ezekiel), to Gozan, and to the cities of the Medes. On the other hand, colonists were brought from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and seated in Samaria. It appears also that other colonists were afterwards sent into the country by Esarhaddon†. These people mingled with the Israelites, who still abode in the land, and were all comprehended under the general name of SAMARITANS, which was derived from the city of Samaria. At first all of them were worshippers of idols; but as wild beasts increased in their depopulated country, they were much disturbed by lions. According to the notions respecting national and local gods which then prevailed in the world, it is not strange that they attributed this calamity to the anger of the god of the country on account of their neglect of his worship. Accordingly, an Israelitish priest was recalled from exile, in order to instruct these idolaters in the worship of Jehovah as a national Deity. He settled at Bethel, where one of the golden calves had formerly stood; and afterwards the Samaritans united the worship of Jehovah with the worship of their own gods.

We will follow the expatriated Israelites into the places of their captivity; but first it is necessary that our attention should be turned to the affairs of Judah, which the mercy and long-suffering of God still continues to spare.

and whose right to the crown of which may have been (in part, at least) derived from marriage, although Herodotus represents him solely as an intrusive conqueror. His name occurs at Abydus; and the respect paid to his monuments by his successors may be considered to imply that his reign was not a wrongful usurpation.

* Isaiah xxx. 1—7.

† Ezra iv. 2; comp. 9, 10.

CHAPTER IX.

JUDAH, FROM 725 B.C. TO 586 B.C.

HEZEKIAH was twenty-five years of age when he succeeded his father Ahaz, in the kingdom of Judah. He was a most pious prince, and thoroughly imbued with the principles of the theocracy. He testified the most lively zeal for the service and honour of Jehovah; while, as a king, he was disposed to manifest the most unreserved reliance on Him and subservience to Him, as Sovereign Lord of the Hebrew people. He therefore won the high eulogium that after him there "was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him."*

He began his reign by the restoration of the true religion and the abolishment of idolatry throughout his dominions. In the

* 2 Kings xviii. 1—5. Such, however, must be understood as popular forms of describing superior character; for the same is said, in the same terms, of his own great-grandson, Josiah.

very first month he opened the doors of the temple, which his father had closed, and restored the worship and service of God in proper order and beauty. In extirpating idolatry he was not content with the abolition of its grosser forms, but sought out the more *native* and intimate superstitions which were incentives thereto. The altars illegally erected to Jehovah, which former kings had spared, were by him overthrown. The brazen serpent, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and which was preserved in the temple, came in time to be regarded as a holy relic, to which at last a sort of superstitious worship was paid, and incense burned before it. This was not unnatural, considering the history of this relic, combined with the fact that ophiolatry was then, and before and after, a very common superstition in Egypt and other countries. It nobly illustrates the vigour of Hezekiah's character, and his entire freedom from superstition of which it is difficult *now* to appreciate the full merit, that he spared not even this certainly interesting relic, but broke it in pieces, and instead of *nahash*, "a serpent," called it contemptuously *nehushtan*, "a brazen bauble."

Much attention was also paid by Hezekiah to the dignified and orderly celebration of the festivals, which formed so conspicuous a feature in the ritual system of the Hebrews. The passover in particular, which had fallen into neglect, was revived with great splendour, and, as noticed in the last chapter, Hezekiah sent couriers through the kingdom of Israel to invite the attendance of the Israelites. His object was so obviously religious only, without any political motives, that the last king of Israel offered no opposition: and indeed a kingdom so nearly on the point of being absorbed into the great Assyrian empire, had small occasion to concern itself respecting any possible designs of Hezekiah. The Israelites were therefore left to act as their own dispositions might determine. The couriers went on from city to city proclaiming the message, and delivering the letters with which they were charged. In these the king of Judah manifested great anxiety to induce the Israelites—"the remnant . . . . who had escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria"*—to return to Jehovah, and by that return avert that utter destruction which seemed to impend over them. The great body of the Israelites received the invitation with laughter and derision; but in Zebulon, Manasseh, and Asher, some were found who "humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem."

Like David, his great model, Hezekiah made provision for the instruction and moral improvement of the people by the public singing of the Psalms in the temple, and by a new collection of the moral maxims of Solomon.

For his righteous doings the Lord was with Hezekiah, and prospered him in all his reasonable undertakings. He extended the fortifications and magazines throughout the country; he supplied Jerusalem more plentifully with water by means of a new aqueduct; and the Philistines, who had penetrated into the southern parts of Judea in the reign of his father, were conquered by his arms.

The possession of the kingdom of Damascene-Syria, and the entire conquest of Israel, rendered the kings of Assyria all-powerful in those countries. Phœnicia was the next to experience the force of their arms. The Tyrians only (according to the citation which Josephus adduces from their own historian, Menander) refused to receive the Assyrian yoke. They fought and dispersed the fleet which the subjugated Phœnicians had furnished for the ulterior objects and remoter enterprises of Shalmaneser. To avenge this act, the Assyrian king left his troops for five years in the Tyrian territory, where they grievously distressed the citizens of Tyre, by cutting off all access to the river and aqueduct from which the town obtained its water. It was the death of Shalmaneser, apparently,

* Some have inferred from this that this was *after* the captivity of Israel. But *that* did not take place until the sixth year of Hezekiah; and it is not likely that one who began his reforms with so much promptitude and vigour, deferred the passover until *after* six years. Besides, the kingdom of Israel after the losses of Pekah to the Assyrians, was but a "remnant" of what it had been.

which induced the Assyrians to abandon the siege.

It was probably the same occasion, together with an undue reliance upon his fortifications, and too much confidence derived from the success which had attended the small wars in which he had been engaged, which led Hezekiah into the same temerity which had been the ruin of Hosea. He discontinued the tribute to the Assyrians which had been imposed upon his father, and by that act threw off the yoke which Ahaz had voluntarily taken on himself.

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, the new king of Assyria, named Sennacherib, came with a large army to reduce the kingdom of Judah to obedience, as well as to invade Egypt, on account of the encouragement which "So," the king of that country, had given to Hosea to revolt, by promises of assistance, which he proved unable to render. Such promises appear to have been renewed to Hezekiah, to induce him to give trouble and employment to a power of which the Egyptians had good cause to be jealous. But the new king, Sethos [Se-pthah, priest of Pthah], who had been a priest, considering the services of the soldiers unnecessary to the security of a kingdom entrusted to the protection of the gods, treated the military caste with much indignity, and much abridged their privileges, in consequence of which they refused, when required, to march against the Assyrians.

Hezekiah, disappointed of the assistance which he had expected from Egypt*, and observing the overwhelming nature of the force put in action, delayed not to make his submissions to Sennacherib, humbly acknowledging his offence, and offering to submit to any tribute which the king might impose upon him. The desire of the Assyrian not to delay his more important operations against Egypt, seems to have inclined him to listen favourably to this overture. He demanded three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold; and this was paid by Hezekiah, although to raise it he was compelled to exhaust the royal and sacred treasures, and even to strip off the gold with which the doors and pillars of the temple was overlaid.

Sennacherib received the silver and gold; but after he had taken Ashdod, one of the keys of Egypt, he began to think it would be unsafe in his invasion of that country to leave the kingdom of Judah unsubdued in his rear. He therefore determined to complete the subjugation of Judah in the first place,—the rather as his recent observations, and the humble submission of Hezekiah, left him little reason to expect much delay or difficulty in this enterprise. He soon reduced all the cities to his power except Libnah and Lachish, to which he laid siege, and Jerusalem, to which he sent his general Rabshakeh with a very haughty summons to surrender. Many blasphemous and disparaging expressions were applied to JEHOVAH by the heathen general. By this HE was, as it were, bound to vindicate his own honour and power; and, accordingly, the prophet Isaiah was commissioned to promise the king deliverance, and to foretell the destruction of the Assyrian host: "Behold, I will send *a blast* upon him, and he shall hear *a rumour*, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."†

The *rumour* by which Sennacherib was alarmed and interrupted, was no other than the report which was spread abroad that Tirhakah the Ethiopian, king of Upper Egypt‡, was marching with an immense

* That he had expectations from that quarter, and that such expectations were known to the Syrians, appears from Rabshakeh's advice to him,—"Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean it will go into his hand and pierce it." 2 Kings xviii. 17—35.

† 2 Kings xix. 7.

‡ "With Tirhakar we are acquainted, both from sacred and profane records; and his successful opposition to the power of Assyria is noticed in the Bible (2 Kings xix. 19; Isa. xxxvii. 9), may be traced in Herodotus (ii. 141), and *is recorded on the walls of a Theban temple.* It is possible that in the early part of his reign Sethos (or "So") divided the kingdom with him, and ruled in Lower Egypt, while the Ethiopian monarch possessed the dominion of the upper country; and this would account for the absence of the name of Sethos on the monuments of Thebes. Whether Tirhakah and Sabaco's claims to the throne of Egypt were derived from any right acquired by intermarriage with the royal family of that country, and whether the dominion was at first confined to the Thebaïd it is difficult to determine: but the respect paid by their successors to the monuments they erected, argues the probability of their having succeeded to the throne by right, rather than by usurpation or the force of arms."—Wilkinson, i. 140. It

[Tirhakah. Rosellini.]

army to cut off his retreat. He then determined to withdraw; but first sent a boasting letter to Hezekiah, defying the God of Israel, and threatening what destructions he would execute upon the nation on his return. But that very night an immense proportion of the Assyrian host—even one hundred and eighty thousand men—were struck dead by "the BLAST" which the prophet had predicted, and which has, with great probability, been ascribed to the agency of the *Simoom*, or hot pestilential south wind.

Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, and in the exasperation of defeat he behaved with great severity to the captive Israelites. But his career was soon closed. Fifty-two days after his return he was slain, while worshipping in the temple of the god Nisroc, by his two eldest sons. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was in every point accomplished. The parricides fled into Armenia, leaving the steps of the throne clear for the ascent of the third son, whose name was Esarhaddon. This great blow so weakened the Assyrian monarchy as not only to free the king of Judah from his apprehensions, but enabled the Medes and Babylonians to assert their independence.

The same year Hezekiah fell sick—apparently of the plague—and he was warned by the prophet Isaiah to prepare for death. The king was afflicted at these tidings; and turning his face to the wall (as he lay in his bed), to be unnoticed by his attendants, he besought the Lord, with tears, to remember him with favour. His prayer was heard; and the prophet, who had not yet left the palace, was charged to return and acquaint Hezekiah, that on the third following day he should resume his customary attendance at the Temple; and not only that, but that fifteen years should be added to his life. In confirmation of this extraordinary communication, the king desired some miraculous sign; and accordingly the shadow of the style upon the dial of Ahaz went backward ten degrees. The event corresponded to these intimations. The prolongation of life was the more important and desirable to Hezekiah, as at that time there was no direct heir to the crown. These circumstances, together with the signal deliverance from Sennacherib, not only cured the people of the idolatry which Ahaz had introduced, and retained them for some time in their fidelity to Jehovah, but excited the curiosity and admiration of the neighbouring nations. Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylon, sent an embassy to congratulate the king on his deliverance from the Assyrians (through which Merodach himself had been enabled to establish his independence in Babylon), and upon his recovery from his illness, as well as to make particular inquiries respecting the miracle by which it was accompanied—and which must have been of peculiar interest to a scientific people like the Babylonians. Hezekiah appears to have been highly flattered by this embassy from so distant a quarter. The ambassadors were treated with much attention and respect, and the king himself took pleasure in showing them the curiosities and treasures of his kingdom. That he had treasures to show, seems to signify that he had

should be added, that at Medinet Abou are the figure and name of Tirhakah, and of the captives he took. The figure is that which we have given from Rosellini. It will be observed that he wears the crown of Upper Egypt, and that only. The name of Sabaco (Sethos, or So) is found at Abydus.

recovered his wealth from the Assyrians, or had enriched himself by their spoil.

The sacred historian attributes Hezekiah's conduct on this occasion to "his pride of heart," involving an appropriation to himself of that glory which belonged only to Jehovah. Although, therefore, his conduct did not occasion the doom, it gave the prophet Isaiah occasion to make known to him that the treasures of his kingdom were the destined spoil, and his posterity the destined captives of the very nation whose present embassage had produced in him so much unseemly pride. This was in every way a most remarkable prediction; for Babylon was then an inconsiderable kingdom, and the people almost unknown by whom the prediction was to be fulfilled. Hezekiah received this announcement with true Oriental submission—satisfied, he said, if there were but peace and truth in his own days.

The remainder of Hezekiah's reign through the years of prolonged life which had been granted to him appears to have been prosperous and happy. To no other man was it ever granted to view the approach of death with certain knowledge, through the long but constantly shortening vista of years that lay before him. At the time long before appointed, Hezekiah died, after a reign of twenty-nine years, B.C. 696.

MANASSEH was but twelve years of age when he lost his father, and began to reign. The temptations which surrounded him, and the evil counsels which were pressed upon him, were too strong for his youth. He was corrupted; and it seemed the special object of his reign to overthrow all the good his father had wrought in Judah. The crimes of all former kings seem light in comparison with those which disgraced his reign. He upheld idolatry with all the influence of the regal power, and that with such inconceivable boldness, that the pure and holy ceremonies of the temple service were superseded by obscene rites of an idol image set up in the very sanctuary; while the courts of God's House were occupied by altars to "the host of heaven," or, the heavenly bodies. He maintained herds of necromancers, astrologers, and soothsayers of various kinds. The practice which was, of all others, the most abhorrent to Jehovah, the king sanctioned by his own atrocious example, for he devoted his own children, by fire, to strange gods, in the blood-stained valley of Ben-Hinnom. Wickedness now reigned on high, and, as usual, persecuted righteousness and truth; so that, by a strong but significant hyperbole, we are told that innocent blood flowed in the streets of Jerusalem like water.

While these things were transacting in Judah, Esarhaddon the king of Assyria was consolidating his power, and endeavouring to re-unite the broken fragments of his father's empire. It was not until the thirtieth year of his reign that he recovered Babylon, the affairs of which appear to have fallen into great disorder after the death of Merodach-Baladan, if we may judge from the occurrence of five reigns and two interregnums of ten years, all in the course of the twenty-nine years, which preceded its reduction again under the Assyrian yoke.

When Esarhaddon had sufficiently re-established his authority, and settled his affairs in the east, he turned his attention westward, and determined to restore his authority in that quarter, and to avenge the disgrace and loss which the Assyrians had sustained in Palestine. This intention constituted him Jehovah's avenger upon the king and nation of Judah, for the manifold iniquities into which they had by this time fallen.

Esarhaddon entered Judah in great force, defeated Manasseh in battle, took him alive, and sent him in chains to Babylon, together with many of his nobles and of the people. They were sent to Babylon probably because Esarhaddon, to prevent another defection, made that city his chief residence during the last thirteen years of his reign. It was probably on the same occasion that he removed the principal remaining inhabitants of Israel, and replaced them by more colonists from the east.

In the solitude of his prison at Babylon, Manasseh became an altered and a better man. The sins of his past life, and the grievous errors of his government were brought vividly before him; and, humbling

himself before the God of his fathers, he cried earnestly for pardon, and besought an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of his repentance. The history makes mention of his prayer, as having been preserved; and the Apocrypha contains a prayer which purports to be that which he used on this occasion. This it would be difficult to prove; but the prayer itself is a good one, and suitable to the occasion.

His prayer was heard, and the opportunity which he sought was granted to him. Esarhaddon gave way to the suggestions of a more generous policy than that by which he had been at first actuated. He released the captive from his prison, and after having, we may presume, won him over to the interests of Assyria, and weaned him from the national bias in favour of an Egyptian alliance, sent him home with honour. Unquestionably, he remained tributary to the Assyrian monarch, and his territory was probably considered as forming a useful barrier between the territories of Assyria and of Egypt. On his return, Manasseh applied himself with great diligence to the correction of the abuses of his former reign. He also fortified the city of Zion on the west side by a second high wall (or, perhaps, he only rebuilt and carried to a greater height the wall which the Assyrians had thrown down), and endeavoured as far as possible to restore the weakened kingdom to a better state. He died in 641 B.C., after a protracted reign of fifty-five years; and, mindful of the first iniquities of his reign, a place in the Sepulchre of the Kings was denied him, but he was buried in his own garden.

AMON the son of Manasseh was twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne of Judah. He had been born after the repentance and restoration of his father; yet the first ways of Manasseh, and not the last, were those which he chose to follow. He revived the idolatries which had been suppressed; but the full development of his plans and character was interrupted by a conspiracy, in which he perished after a short reign of two years, 639 B.C.

JOSIAH was but eight years old at the death of his father; and during his minority the affairs of the government were administered by the high-priest Joachim and a council of elders at Jerusalem. The young king profited well by the excellent education he received under the tutelage of the high-priest. After a minority of eight years he assumed the government, and proceeded to act with far greater vigour against the idolatries of the land than the regent had ventured to exercise. He not only destroyed every form of idolatry which he was able to detect, but overthrew the altars illegally erected to Jehovah, and corrected the other irregularities which had in previous times been tolerated. In the course of these purgations, which were conducted by the king in person, he came to Bethel, and there (according to the prediction made nearly four centuries before, which had mentioned him *by name,*) he defiled the altar which Jeroboam had erected before the golden calf in that place, by burning thereon the disinterred bones of dead men—the bones of the worshippers. And it was thus that the idolatrous altars were defiled by him throughout the land.

The zeal of the king took him beyond the limits of his own kingdom into the land of Israel, which he traversed even to its remoter parts, uprooting idolatry and all its adjuncts wherever he came. For this rather remarkable proceeding out of his own kingdom, there are different ways of accounting. The most probable seems to be that, in restoring Manasseh to his throne, the king of Assyria had extended his authority (for the purpose of internal government) over the neighbouring territory. His favour and confidence, continued to Josiah, agrees with and helps to explain some other circumstances.

When these operations were completed, measures were taken for a thorough repair of the temple. While this was in progress, the high-priest, Hilkiah, discovered the autograph copy of the Law, written by the hand of Moses, which had been deposited in or beside the ark of the covenant in the sanctuary. By his direction Shaphan, the chief scribe, read therefrom in the audience of the king, who no sooner heard that part which contains the prophecies of Moses against the nation,

foretelling the captivities and destructions which should befall it for its iniquities, than Josiah knew by signs not to be mistaken, that the predicted calamities were imminent, for the iniquities had been rife, and the doom could not but soon follow; already, indeed, by the captivity of Israel, it had been half accomplished. It was for this that the king rent his garments. He delayed not to send to Huldah, the prophetess, "who dwelt in Jerusalem in the college," to learn from her the real intentions of Jehovah, and the sense in which these alarming denunciations were to be understood. She confirmed the obvious interpretation,—that the unquenchable wrath of God would ere long be poured out upon Judah and Jerusalem, consuming, or bringing into bondage, the land, the city, the temple, the people, the king; but adding, as to the king himself, that because of the righteousness which had been found in him, he should be gathered to his grave before those evil days arrived.

By these disclosures new zeal for the Law was kindled in the heart of Josiah. The very same year, he caused the passover to be celebrated with great solemnity, in which not only the people of Judah, but the remnant of the Hebrew race, which the Assyrians had left in the land of Israel, joined. There had been no such passover since the foundation of the kingdom.

To understand the circumstances which led to the death of king Josiah, it is necessary to view correctly the position of his kingdom, as a frontier barrier between the two great kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt, whose borders, by the conquests of the former power were, and had for some time been, in close and dangerous approximation. It is obvious that, from the first, the political game of Western Asia in that age lay between Egypt and Assyria, the former power being the only power west of the Euphrates which could for an instant be expected to resist or retaliate the aggressive movements of the latter. There was little question that the rich and fertile valley of the Nile might tempt the cupidity or the ambition of the Assyrians. It was therefore the obvious policy of the kings of Egypt to maintain the kingdoms of Israel and Judah as a barrier between their country and the Assyrians, and it was the equally obvious policy of the latter to break that barrier down. Hence Hosea in Israel had been encouraged by Sabaco to assert his independence, with a promise of support, which there is reason to believe that the Egyptian king was less unwilling than unable to render. The fall of Israel, as it weakened the barrier, could not but be a matter of regret to the Egyptians, and it would still be their desire to strengthen the hands of the kings of Judah. In this position it became a question at Jerusalem, as it had been in Samaria, whether the forbearance of the Assyrians should be purchased by submission, or that reliance should be reposed on the support of Egypt in opposition to that great power. The kings and people seem to have been generally well disposed "to lean upon Egypt," not more from habit and ancient intercourse, than from the perception that it was clearly the interest of that country to support them against the Assyrians. But when it had happened more than once that Egypt, after having encouraged them to shake off the Assyrian yoke, was unable (we cannot believe unwilling) to render the stipulated assistance at the time it was most needed, and left them exposed to the tender mercies of the provoked Assyrians, the prophets raised their voice against a confidence and an alliance by which nothing but calamity had been produced, and encouraged unreserved and quiet submission to the Assyrian yoke. Even Hezekiah, however, as we have seen, was induced by the prospect of support from Egypt to throw off his dependence on Assyria. The consequent invasion of Judah by Sennacherib was so obviously threatening to Egypt, that Sethos (the king who then reigned in Lower Egypt) could only have been prevented by the state of affairs in his own dominion from rendering the assistance which he had led the king of Judah to expect. But, as already stated, this very unwarlike person—a priest by education and habit—had so offended the powerful military caste by abridgments of their privileges, that they refused to act, even in defence of the country. But when Tirhakah,

the Ethiopian, who ruled in Upper Egypt, heard of the threatened invasion by Sennacherib, he marched against him; and the Scriptural account would imply that the mere rumour of his approach sufficed to induce the Assyrians to contemplate a retreat, which was hastened by the singular destruction in his army by the pestilential simoom *. This solitary example of assistance from Egypt, although from an unexpected quarter, may be supposed to have strengthened the predilection of the king and people of Judah towards the Egyptian alliance; and it was almost certainly with the concurrence of Egypt that Manasseh allowed himself to incur the wrath of the Assyrians. But during his imprisonment at Babylon he would seem to have acquired the conviction that it was his best policy to adhere to his Assyrian vassalage; and we may conclude he was not released without such oaths and covenants as his awakened conscience bound him to observe. He was probably restored to his throne as a sworn tributary, or as being bound to keep the country as a frontier against Egypt. The conduct of Josiah renders this the most probable conclusion.

* Sir J. G. Wilkinson alleges, we know not on what authority, that Sennacherib was fought and beaten by Tirhakah, and attributes to the jealousy of the Memphites the version of the affair given to Herodotus, by which he considers the truth to be disguised and the glory of Tirhakah obscured. This version is, that the Assyrians actually invaded Egypt; and Sethos being unsupported by the military, was induced by a dream to march against the enemy at the head of an undisciplined rabble of artisans and labourers. While the two parties were encamped opposite each other, near Pelusium, a prodigious number of field mice visited the Assyrian camp by night and gnawed to pieces their quivers and bows, as well as the handles of their shields; so that, in the morning, finding themselves without arms, they fled in confusion, losing great numbers of their men. This is the story which Sir J. G. Wilkinson regards as invented by the Memphites to withdraw from Tirhakah the credit of the Assyrian overthrow, which was really his work. But from the cast given to the story, we are very much more disposed to believe that it is rather a version of the extraordinary overthrow which the Assyrians sustained *by night* in Palestine, and which the Egyptians desired to appropriate to their own country and their own gods. Or may it not be that, seeing the Hebrews alleged their God to be the Creator of the world, the Egyptians considered him the same as Pthah, the creator in their mythology, and whose priest Sethos had been? This seems to us very likely, the rather as it is difficult without this supposed identity to account for a circumstance in a following reign, when Necho expected to influence the pious Josiah by saying that God had sent him (Necho) to war against the Assyrians.

The Assyrian power got involved in wars with the Medes and Chaldeans, by which its attention was fully engaged and its energies weakened. Egypt, on the other hand, united under one king, had been consolidating its strength. Pharaoh-Necho, the king of that country, thought the opportunity favourable to act aggressively against the Assyrians, and to that end resolved to march and attack this old enemy on his old frontier. Carchemish, an important post on the Euphrates, and the key of Assyria on the western side, was the point to which his march was directed. He passed along the sea-coast of Palestine, northward, the route usually followed by the Egyptian kings when they entered Asia. Josiah being apprised of this, and mindful of his relation to Assyria, and of his obligation to defend the frontier against the Egyptians, assembled his forces and determined to impede, if he could not prevent, the march of Necho through his territories. When the Egyptian king heard that Josiah had posted himself on the skirts of the plain of Esdraelon —that great battle-field of nations—to oppose his progress, he sent messengers to engage him to desist from his interference, alleging that he had no hostile intentions against Judah, but against an enemy with whom he was at war, and warning Josiah that his imprudent interference might prove fatal to himself and his people. But these considerations had no weight with Josiah, against what appeared to him a clear case of duty. He resisted the progress of the Egyptian army with great spirit, considering the disproportion of numbers. He himself fought in disguise; but a commissioned arrow found him out, and inflicted a mortal wound in the neck. He directed his attendants to remove him from the battle-field. Escaping from the heavy shower of arrows with which their broken ranks were overwhelmed, they removed him from the chariot in which he was wounded, and, placing him in "the second chariot that he had," they conveyed him to Jerusalem, where he died. Thus prematurely perished, at the age of thirty-nine, one of the best and most zealous kings who ever sat upon the throne of David. His zeal in his vocation, as the overtur er

of idolatry, must have been much stimulated by the knowledge that he had been pre-ordained, by name, to this service, many centuries before his birth. We know not why the last act of his life should be deemed blameworthy by many who in other respects think highly of his character and reign. Was it not rather noble and heroic in him to oppose the vast host of Necho, in obedience to the obligation which his family had incurred to the Assyrian kings, and in consideration of which his grandfather, his father, and himself, had been permitted to exercise the sovereign authority in the land? The death of Josiah was lamented by the prophet Jeremiah in an elegiac ode, which has not been preserved.

Intent upon his original design, Necho paused not to avenge himself upon the Judahites for the opposition he had encountered, but continued his march to the Euphrates.

Three months had scarcely elapsed, when, returning victorious from the capture of Carchemish and the defeat of the Assyrians, he learned that the people had called a younger son of Josiah, named JEHOAHAZ or Shallum, twenty-three years old, to the throne, overlooking his elder brother. Displeased that such a step had been taken without any reference to the will of their now paramount lord and conqueror, he sent and summoned Jehoahaz to attend on him at Riblah in the land of Hamath; and having deposed him and condemned the land to pay in tribute a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold, he took him as a prisoner to Jerusalem. On arriving there, Necho made Eliakim, the eldest son of Josiah, king in the room of his father, changing his name to Jehoiakim, according to a custom frequently practised by lords paramount and masters towards subject princes and slaves. The altered name was a mark of subjection. Then taking the silver and gold which he had levied upon the people, Necho departed for Egypt, taking with him the captive Jehoahaz, who there terminated his short and inglorious career, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah*.

* Jer. xxii. 10—12.

JEHOIAKIM, the eldest son of Josiah, was twenty-five years old when he began to reign. He reigned eleven years, and by his idolatries and misgovernment proved himself worthy of the throne of Ahaz and Manasseh. Early in his reign he was called to repentance by the prophet Jeremiah, who publicly, at the feast of tabernacles, in the ears of the assembled nation, denounced, in the name of Jehovah, the severest judgments against king and people, including the destruction of the city and the temple. For this he was seized as a seditious person, worthy of death; but he was acquitted by the nobles, and on this and other occasions screened by some persons of influence who had been in power in the good times of Josiah.

Meanwhile the war in the east approached its termination. The allied Medes and Babylonians, the former under Cyaxares, and the latter under Nabopolassar, besieged the last Assyrian king in Nineveh. The siege was turned into a blockade; and Nabopolassar, already assuming the government of the empire which had fallen from the enfeebled hands of the Assyrians, despatched his son Nebuchadnezzar westward, with an adequate force, to chastise the Egyptians for their late proceedings, and to restore the revolted Syrians and Phœnicians to their obedience. In these different objects he completely succeeded†. Carchemish he recovered from the Egyptians, and Jehoiakim was compelled to transfer his allegiance from Necho to the Babylonian. This was in the first year of his reign; in the second, Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the allies. The conquering Medes were content to have secured their independence and avenged their wrongs, and left to the conquering Chaldeans the lion's share of the spoil. Babylon now became the imperial capital; but Nabopolassar himself, the founder of the great Chaldæ-Babylonian empire, died almost immediately after the fall of Nineveh, and the young hero in the west was called to fill the glorious throne which his father had set up.

The absence of Nebuchadnezzar in another quarter seemed to the king of Egypt a favourable opportunity of recovering his

† Berosus in Joseph. 'Antiq.' x 11, 1.

foreign conquests. He therefore undertook another expedition against Carchemish*; and as Jehoiakim, in Judea, renounced, about the same time, his sworn allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, there is much reason to conclude that he was encouraged to this step by the Egyptian king. This measure was earnestly but ineffectually reprobated by the prophet Jeremiah, who foretold the consequences which actually followed.

Nebuchadnezzar, who was certainly the greatest general of that age, did not allow the Egyptian king to surprise him. He met and defeated him at Carchemish, and then, pursuing his victory, stripped the Egyptian of all his northern possessions, from the river Euphrates to the Nile, and this by so strong an act of repression that he dared "come not again any more out of his land."

The king of Judah now lay at the mercy of the hero whose anger he had so unadvisedly provoked. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, and took it. He committed no destructions but such as were the direct effect of his military operations; and with a leniency very rare in those days, he refrained from displacing Jehoiakim from his throne. He was content to indemnify himself by the spoils of the temple, part of the golden ornaments and vessels of which he took away, and with removing to Babylon some members of the royal family, and sons of the principal nobles. These would serve as hostages, and at the same time help to swell the pomp and ostentation of the Babylonian court. Among the persons thus removed was Daniel and his three friends, whose condition and conduct will soon engage our notice, as part of the history of the Captivity. It must be evident that the leniency exhibited on this occasion by Nebuchadnezzar, may be ascribed to his desire to maintain the kingdom of Judah as a barrier between his Syrian dominions and Egypt; for since Egypt had become aggressive, it was no longer his interest that this barrier should be destroyed.

The court at Jerusalem soon again fell into much disorder. The king turned a deaf ear to all wise counsel and all truth, as delivered by the prophet Jeremiah, and listened only to the false prophets who won his favour by the flattering prospects which they drew, and by the chimerical hopes which they created. The final result was, that this prince again had the temerity to renounce his allegiance to the Babylonian, to whose clemency he owed his life and throne.

This occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, B.C. 604, which it is important to note, as it is from this date that the "seventy years" of the Babylonish captivity is with the greatest apparent propriety dated†. This period of seventy years of exile was foretold by Jeremiah‡; and it is most remarkable, that from whichever of the more marked points these seventy years be commenced, we are brought at the termination to some one equally marked point in the history of the restoration and re-settlement of the nation.

Jehoiakim was not at all reformed by the calamity which had befallen his house and country. It only served to increase the ferocity of his spirit. This reign, therefore, continued to be cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive; and still more and more his eyes and his heart were intent on covetousness, oppression, and the shedding of innocent blood. Of this an instance is found in the case of the prophet Urijah, whom he slew "with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people," because he prophesied of the impending calamities of Judah and Jerusalem§. For these things the *personal* doom of Jehoiakim was thus pronounced by Jeremiah:—

* Jer. xlvi. 2.

† Dated from this point, the seventy years expired in B.C. 536, the year that Cyrus took Babylon, and issued a decree for the return of such of the Jews as chose, throughout his dominions, to their own land (Ezra iii. 1, v. 13); and this agrees with the account of Josephus, "in the first year of Cyrus, which was the seventieth (το εβδομηκοστον) from the day of the removal of our people from their native land to Babylon," &c. (Ant. xi. 1, 1); for from B.C. 605 to B.C. 536 was sixty-nine years complete, or seventy years current. Hales, to whom we are indebted for this conclusion, thinks, that it affords a satisfactory adjustment of the chronology of this most intricate and disputed period of the Captivity, and that in it "all the varying reports of sacred and profane chronology are reconciled and brought into harmony with each other."

‡ Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21—23.

§ Jer. xxii. 13—16, xxvi. 20—23.

" —— Thus saith JEHOVAH,
Concerning Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Israel,—
They shall not lament for him, saying,
Ah, my brother! nor [*for the queen*], Ah, sister!
They shall not lament for him, saying,
Ah, Lord! nor [*for her*], Ah, her glory!
With the burial of an ass shall he be buried,
Drawn forth and cast beyond the gates of Jerusalem."*

For this prophecy the prophet was cast into prison, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. The following year, acted upon by that strong *constraint* to deliver the word entrusted to him, which he himself so forcibly describes†, Jeremiah dictated to his friend and follower, the scribe Baruch, another prophecy, to the same effect as the former, but couched in stronger language, declaring the ruin which impended, through the Babylonian king, unless speedy and strong repentance intervened to avert the doom. The roll, thus written, Baruch was sent to read publicly to the people assembled from all the country on account of a solemn fast for which public opinion had called. Baruch accordingly read it in the court of the temple, in the audience of all the people assembled there. He afterwards, at their request, read it more privately to the princes. They heard it with consternation, and determined to make its contents known to the king. Baruch was directed to go and conceal himself, and the roll was taken and read to the king, who was then sitting in his winter apartment, with a brazier of burning charcoal before him. When he had heard three or four sections, the king kindled into rage, and taking the roll from the reader, he cut it with the scribe's knife, and threw it into the fire, where it was consumed. He also ordered the prophet and his friend to be put to death; but this was averted by the kind providence of the Almighty Master whom they served.

The undaunted prophet directed Baruch to re-write the prophecy which had been burnt, with additional matter of the same purport; while to Jehoiakim himself the terrible message was sent:—

" —— Thus saith JEHOVAH,
Concerning Jehoiakim, king of Judah,—
He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David;
And his dead body shall be cast out,
In the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost."—Jer. xxxvi. 30.

The end of this miserable man doubtless corresponded with these predictions, although the historical narrative of that event is involved in some obscurity and apparent contradiction. The statement we shall now give appears to be the only one by which, as it appears to us, all these difficulties can be reconciled. It is evident that if Jehoiakim did not again revolt, his conduct was at least so unsatisfactory to the king of Babylon, that he sent an army against Jerusalem, containing some Chaldean troops, but composed chiefly from the surrounding subject nations, as the Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. *In what manner* they performed their mission we know not, but according to the figurative description which Ezekiel‡ gives of Jehoiakim as a rapacious "lion's whelp," we learn that "the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit; and they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon." Nebuchadnezzar was then probably at Riblah, at which place the eastern conquerors appear to have usually held their court when in Syria. He bound the captive king "in fetters [intending] to carry him to Babylon;"§ but took him first to Jerusalem, where he ap-

* Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

† "Thou didst persuade me, JEHOVAH, and I was persuaded;
Thou wast stronger than I, and didst prevail.
I am every day the object of laughter;
Every one of them holdeth me in derision.
For whensoever I speak,—
If I cry out of violence, and proclaim devastation,
The word of Jehovah is turned against me,
Into reproach and disgrace continually.
But when I say, I will not make mention of it,
Neither will I speak any more in his name;
Then it becomes in my heart as a burning fire,
Being pent up in my bones:
I am weary with refraining, and CANNOT [*be silent*]."
Jer. xx. 7—9.

‡ Ezek. xix. 5—9.

§ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.

pears to have died before this intention could be executed; and the prophecies require us to conclude that his body was cast forth with indignity, and lay exposed to the elements and beasts of prey, which is what is intended by "the burial of an ass."*

The preceding invaders appear to have been contented with securing the person of Jehoiakim, and taking him to Nebuchadnezzar; for when they had departed with their royal captive, the people made his son JECONIAH (otherwise Jehoiachim and Coniah) king in the room of his father. He was then (B.C. 597) eighteen years of age, and had barely time to manifest his bad disposition, when Nebuchadnezzar himself, who was displeased at this appointment, appeared before Jerusalem. It would seem that he was admitted without opposition; but Jeconiah was, nevertheless, held a close prisoner. The money which remained in the royal treasury, and the golden utensils of the temple, were collected and sent as spoil to Babylon; and the deposed king, and his whole court, seven thousand soldiers, one thousand artisans, and two thousand nobles and men of wealth, altogether, with wives and children, amounting probably to 40,000 persons, were sent away into captivity to the river Chebar (Chaboras) in Mesopotamia. Thus only the lower class of citizens and peasantry were left behind. The future prophet, Ezekiel, was among the captives; and Mattaniah, the remaining son of Josiah, and brother of Jehoiakim, was made king of the impoverished land by Nebuchadnezzar, who, according to the custom in such cases, changed his name to ZEDEKIAH, and bound him by strong and solemn oaths of allegiance.

The Hebrews who remained in Judah continued however to cherish dreams of independence from the Chaldeans—impossible under the circumstances in which Western Asia was then placed, or possible only through such special interventions of Providence as had glorified their early history, but all further claim to which they had long since forfeited. Even the captives in Mesopotamia and Chaldea were looking forward to a speedy return to their own land. These extravagant expectations were strongly discouraged by Jeremiah in Jerusalem, and by Ezekiel in Mesopotamia; but their reproofs were not heeded, nor their prophecies believed. Accordingly, Zedekiah, who seems not to have been ill-disposed, otherwise than as influenced by evil counsellors, was led openly to renounce his allegiance, in the ninth year of his reign. The temerity of this act would be astonishing and unaccountable, were it not that, as usual, the renunciation was attended by an alliance with the king of Egypt, Pharaoh-Hophra—the Apries and Vaphres of profane authors—who indeed had acquired a prominence in this quarter which might make the preference of his alliance seem a comparatively safe speculation. Apries in the early part of his reign was a very prosperous king. He sent an expedition against the Isle of Cyprus; besieged and took Gaza†, and the city of Sidon; engaged and vanquished the king of Tyre; and, being uniformly successful he made himself master of Phœnicia, and part of Palestine; thus recovering much of that influence in Syria which had been taken from Egypt by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

From the result it is evident that, on receiving the news of this revolt of one who owed his throne to him, and whose fidelity to him had been pledged by the most solemn vows, Nebuchadnezzar resolved no longer to attempt to maintain the separate existence of Judah as a royal state, but to incorporate it absolutely, as a province, with his empire. An army was, with little delay, marched into Judea, and laid immediate siege to Jerusalem. Jeremiah continued to counsel the king to save the city and temple by unreserved submission to the Chaldeans, and abandonment of the Egyptian alliance; but his auditors, trusting that the Egyptians would march to the relief of the place, determined to protract the defence of the city to the utmost. The Egyptians did, in fact, march to their assistance; but when Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege of Jerusalem and advanced to meet them, they retreated

* Jer. xxii. 19.

† Jer. xlvii. 1.

before him into Egypt, without hazarding a battle.

The withdrawal of the Chaldean forces from Jerusalem, with the confident expectation that they would be defeated by the Egyptians, filled the inhabitants with the most extravagant joy, and quite reversed, and so evinced the hollowness of, the slight acts of repentance and reformation which the apparent urgency of danger had produced. Their short-lived joy was terminated by the re-appearance of the Chaldeans before the city. They prepared, however, to make a vigorous, or at least a protracted, defence, for they well knew that, after so many provocations, little mercy was to be expected from Nebuchadnezzar, and they were probably acquainted with the fell purpose which that great monarch appears to have formed.

In the account of this siege much notice is taken of the respective works, the forts, the towers, etc., of the besiegers and the besieged. This may throw some light on the state to which the art of attacking and defending towns had then attained.

The siege was continued until the eleventh year of Zedekiah (B.C. 586), eighteen months from the beginning, when the Chaldeans stormed the city about midnight, and put the inhabitants to the sword, young and old, many of them in the very courts of the temple. The king himself, with his sons, his officers, and the remnant of the army, escaped from the city, but were pursued by the Chaldeans, and overtaken in the plain of Jericho, and carried as prisoners to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah in the province of Hamah. The Babylonian king upbraided Zedekiah for his ingratitude and breach of faith, and ordered a terrible punishment to be inflicted on him. To cut off all future hope of reigning in his race, he ordered his sons to be slain before his eyes; and then, to exclude him from all hope of ever again reigning in his own person, he ordered that the last throes of his murdered children should be his last sight in this world. His eyes were put out—a barbarous mode of disqualifying a man for political good or evil, with which the governments of the East still continue to visit those whose offences excite displeasure, or whose pretensions create fear. The blind king was then led in fetters of brass to Babylon, where he died. Thus were fulfilled two prophecies by different and distant prophets, which by their apparent dissonance had created mirth and derision in Jerusalem. Jeremiah had told the king, after the return of the Chaldean army to the siege, that he should surely be taken prisoner; that his eyes should see the king of Babylon, and that he should be carried captive to Babylon, and that he should die there, not by the sword, but in peace, and with the same honourable "burnings" with which his fathers had been interred*; while Ezekiel had predicted that he should be brought captive to Babylon, yet should never see that city, although he should die therein†.

Nebuchadnezzar appears to have been dissatisfied at the only partial manner in which his purposes against Judah had been executed. He therefore sent Nebuzaradan, the captain of his guard, with an army of Chaldeans to Jerusalem. The temple and the city were then burnt to the ground, and all the walls demolished, while all the vessels of brass, silver, and gold, which had been left before, and all the treasure of the temple, the palace, and the houses of the nobles, were taken for spoil; and of the people none were left but the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen. This was about a month after the city was first taken.

Thus was the land made desolate, that "she might enjoy her sabbaths," or the arrearage of sabbatic years, of which she had been defrauded by the avarice and disobedience of the people. That these sabbatic years, being the celebration of every seventh year as a season of rest, even to the soil which then lay fallow, amounted to not less than seventy, shows how soon, and how long, that important and faith-testing institution had been neglected by the nation. The early predictions of Moses‡, and the later one of Jeremiah§, that the land should enjoy the *rest* of which it had been defrauded, is very remarkable, when we consider that, as

* Jer. xxxii. 4, 5, xxxiv. 3, 5.
† Ezek. xii. 13.
‡ Lev. xxvi. 34.
§ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

exemplified in Israel, it was not the general policy of the conquerors to leave the conquered country in desolation, but to replenish it by foreign colonists, by whom it might be cultivated.

Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah, a Hebrew of distinction, governor of the poor remnant which was left in the land. Gedaliah was a well-disposed man, of a generous and unsuspecting nature, who was anxious to promote the well-being of the people by reconciling them to the Babylonian government. In this design he was assisted by Jeremiah, who had been released from prison when the city was taken, and was treated with much consideration by the Babylonian general, to whose care he had been recommended by Nebuchadnezzar himself. Nebuzaradan indeed offered to take him to Babylon and provide for him there; but the prophet chose rather to remain with his friend Gedaliah, who fixed his residence at Mizpeh beyond Jordan.

As soon as the Babylonian army had withdrawn, those nobles and warriors returned who had saved themselves by flight in the first instance. Among these was Ishmael, a prince of the royal family, who, jealous of the possession by Gedaliah of the government to which he considered that his birth gave him the best right, formed a conspiracy to take away his life. This was intimated to the governor, but he treated it as an infamous calumny upon Ishmael, which generous confidence was rewarded by his being murdered, with all the Hebrews and Chaldeans at Mizpeh who were attached to him, by that bad man and his dependants. The vengeance of the Chaldeans was now to be dreaded, and therefore Ishmael and all his followers fled towards the country of the Ammonites (who had promoted the designs of Ishmael). They attempted to take with them the king's daughter and the residue of the people; but these were recovered by Johanan and other officers, who pursued them, so that Ishmael escaped with only eight men to the Ammonites. Johanan and the others were fearful of the effects of the resentment of the Chaldeans for the massacre of which Ishmael had been guilty. They therefore determined to take refuge in Egypt with all the people. This intention was earnestly opposed by Jeremiah, who, in the name of Jehovah, promised them peace and safety if they remained; but threatened death by pestilence, famine, and sword, if they went down to Egypt. They went, however, and compelled Jeremiah himself to go with them; and it is alleged by tradition that they put him to death in that country for the ominous prophecies he continued to utter there.

Nebuzaradan soon after arrived in the country with the view of avenging the murder of Gedaliah and the massacre of the Chaldeans who were with him; but the country was so thin of inhabitants, in consequence of the secession to Egypt, that he could find no more than 745 persons in the land, whom he sent into captivity beyond the Euphrates. Thus signally was the long predicted depopulation of the land completed; and although nomadic tribes wandered through the country, and the Edomites settled in some of its southern parts, yet the land remained, on the whole, uninhabited, and ready for the Hebrews, whose return had as much been the subject of prophecy as their captivity had been.

For the clearer apprehension of the facts which have been stated, it will be desirable to trace the further operations of the Babylonians in those quarters.

The year after the conquest of Judea, Nebuchadnezzar resolved to take a severe revenge upon all the surrounding nations which had solicited the Judahites to a confederacy against him, or had encouraged them to rebel, although they now, for the most part, rejoiced in their destruction. These were the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Arabians, the Sidonians, Tyrians, and Philistines; nor did he forget the Egyptians, who had taken a foremost part in action or intrigue against him. This had been foretold by the prophets. It had been foretold that all these nations were to be subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and were assigned to share with the Hebrews the bondage of seventy years to that power. Some of them were conquered sooner and some later; but the end of this period was the common term for

the deliverance of them all from their bondage to Babylon.

After Nebuchadnezzar had subdued the eastern and western states in his first campaign, he commenced the siege of the strong city of Old Tyre, on the continent, in the year 584 B.C., being two years after the destruction of Jerusalem. This siege occupied thirteen years, a fact which illustrates, perhaps, not so much the strength of the place as the vitality of a commercial state. This is, however, only to intimate that during this period the city was invested by a Chaldean army; for many other important enterprises were undertaken and accomplished during the same period. It was during the siege that Nebuzaradan marched into Judea to avenge the murder of Gedaliah and the Chaldeans, as just related.

Before Tyre was taken, the inhabitants, having the command of the sea, fled with all their effects to the insular Tyre in its neighbourhood; so that the Chaldean army found but little spoil to reward their long toil and patience in the siege. This had been foretold by the prophet Ezekiel*; but although Nebuchadnezzar had "no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it," in the long course of which "every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled," yet as a compensation they were promised the plunder of "the land of Egypt," "her multitude," "her spoil," and "her prey." Accordingly, in the spring of the year 570 B.C., after the war with Tyre was finished, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt, and, from a concurrence of weakening circumstances in that country, was enabled to overrun the whole country from Migdol, its northern extremity, near the Red Sea, to Syene, the southern, bordering upon Ethiopia. This he also subdued, together with the other auxiliaries of the Egyptians. The reigning king was the same Pharaoh-Hophra, or Apries, who was on the throne at the time Jerusalem was besieged, and whose faint and abortive motion to relieve his allies has been recorded. This proud and haughty tyrant was reduced to vassalage; and so wasted and depopulated was the land by the invaders that it lay comparatively desolate for forty years. The king was himself soon after defeated and captured by his discontented and revolted subjects, under Amasis, who was made king, and who was reluctantly compelled by the clamours of the soldiers to inflict death upon his predecessor. Amasis was confirmed in the throne by the Assyrian king†.

* Ezek. xxix. 18—20.

† To this account, in which Hales and his authorities have been followed, it seems desirable to add the remarks which are found in Sir J. G. Wilkinson's recent work on the Ancient Egyptians (i. 174, &c.). After quoting the prophecies, which, in connection with the statements of Herodotus, are given *as history* in our own text, he says:—"I shall now endeavour to show how these prophecies were accomplished, and to explain the probable reason of Herodotus' silence on the subject of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. The defeat and death of Apries, before mentioned, are given on the authority of Herodotus, who represents Amasis as a rebel chief, taking advantage of the disaffection of the army to dethrone his sovereign. This information he received from the Egyptian priests; but no mention was made of the signal defeat their army experienced, or of that loss of territory in Syria which resulted from the successes of the victorious Nebuchadnezzar. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that they disguised the truth from the Greek historian; and, without mentioning the disgrace which had befallen their country, and the interposition of a foreign power, attributed the change of the succession and the elevation of Amasis to the throne, solely to his ambition and the choice of the Egyptian soldiery. . . . . Josephus expressly states that the Babylonian monarch led an army into Cœlo-Syria, of which he obtained possession, and then waged war on the Ammonites and Moabites. If Josephus be correct in this statement, there is reason to suppose that he alludes to Apries being deposed and succeeded by Amasis, and we can readily imagine that the Babylonians, having extended their conquests to the extremity of Palestine, would, on the increase of intestine commotion in Egypt, hasten to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them of attacking the country. And the civil war and the fatal consequences appear to have been predicted by Isaiah (xix. 2, &c.). . . . . From a comparison of all these authorities, I conclude that the civil war between Apries and Amasis did not terminate in a single conflict, but lasted several years; and that either Amasis solicited the aid and intervention of Nebuchadnezzar, or that this prince, availing himself of the disordered state of the country, of his own accord invaded it, deposed the rightful sovereign, and placed Amasis on the throne, on condition of paying tribute to the Babylonians. The injury done to the lands and cities of Egypt by this invasion, and the disgrace with which the Egyptians felt themselves overwhelmed after such an event, would justify the account given in the Bible of the fall of Egypt, and to witness many of their compatriots taken captive to Babylon, and to become tributary to an enemy whom they held in abhorrence, would be considered by the Egyptians the greatest calamity, as though they had for ever lost their station in the scale of nations."

BOOK V.

THE REMNANT.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPTIVITY.

BEFORE we enter upon the historical details of the period which now opens, it is proper to take a rapid survey of the principles developed in the history through which we have passed, and to indicate the consequences which are exhibited in the portion that lies before us.

In the second chapter of the first book we have stated, in general terms, the leading design of the selection of the Hebrew race, and of their settlement in the land of Canaan as a distinct and peculiar people, and separated from all other nations by the peculiar institutions which were given to them. That they were appointed to be "stewards of the mysteries of God" is the substance of the considerations stated there and enforced in subsequent passages. The history itself shows under what forms and obligations the stewardship was imposed, and how unfaithfully its duties were discharged; and we are come to the punishments which that unfaithfulness incurred.

And did that unfaithfulness render the promises and designs of God of no effect? Nay, much otherwise: but rather tended to illustrate the more strongly his Almightiness, by the accomplishment of all his designs, in spite of, *and even through*, the reluctance, the improbity, and the treachery of the instruments he employed. They might have worked His high will with great happiness and honour to themselves; but since they did not choose this, they were compelled to work that will even by their misery and dishonour. It was not in the power of the instruments to frustrate the intentions of JEHOVAH; they only had power to determine whether that will should be accomplished with happiness or with misery to themselves, and, in consequence, somewhat to vary *the mode* in which those designs were exhibited and fulfilled.

The main cause of the personal and national failure of the Israelites, as instruments of a design which was accomplished notwithstanding their misdoings, is by no means of difficult detection. Politically considered, it may be resolved into what has been in all ages and countries the leading cause of calamity and miscarriage—a reliance upon men and upon individual character, which at best is but temporary and fluctuating, rather than upon institutions which are permanent and unchanging. In *these*, every needful amelioration is an abiding good; whereas the existence of a good king, or judge, or priest, is at the most but "a fortunate accident," contingent on that most feeble thing, the breath of man. Nothing had been wanting to fortify their peculiar position by institutions admirably suited to their destined object, and made more impregnable by numerous sanctions and obligations than any other institutions ever were, or indeed ever can, with any propriety, be made, by any authority short of that Infinite Wisdom by which the Hebrew institutions were established. Thus the nation was placed in the peculiarly advantageous position—which many enlightened nations have struggled for and sought after in vain—that their happiness, their prosperity, their liberties, were not dependent on the will of any

men or set of men, but rested on firm institutions which were as obligatory upon the chiefs of the land as upon the meanest of the people.

But this was a new thing on the earth, and the Hebrew nation seemed utterly incapable of appreciating its value; and, indeed, what Oriental nation is there, at this advanced day, by which the value of so precious a gift would be duly appreciated? They rested always on men; they always wanted leaders. And as they were led they followed: if their leaders were good and just men, they did well; if evil men, not well. They turned their back upon institutions, and threw themselves upon the accidents of human character:—and they fared accordingly. This preference occurs everywhere in the history of this people, and is with peculiar prominence evinced in their determination to have "a king to rule them like the nations," in the ease with which Jeroboam was enabled to establish a schismatical worship in ten of the tribes, and in the facility with which, even in Judah, the people followed the examples offered by their kings.

With reference to this point, the character so frequently given to Jeroboam when the sacred writers have occasion to mention his name, as "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who sinned, *and made Israel to sin*," has always seemed to us frightfully emphatic and significant.

Had the ancient Hebrews adhered to their institutions, it was impossible for them, as a political body, not to have fulfilled their special vocation in the world. But having, by the neglect of those institutions (which, among other benefits, secured the absence of idolatry and its concomitant vices), done all that in them lay to frustrate the very objects for the promotion of which existence had been given to them, they made it necessary that God should accomplish his own objects, not, as desired, by their welfare and by the confusion of their enemies, but by their misery and destitution. It was left Him to demonstrate his Almightiness—his supreme power—over all the "gods" which swarmed the world, not by overthrowing with his strong hand all the enemies who rose against them, and by maintaining them in the land he had given them, against the old conquerors by whom great empires were thrown down, but by making these very nations the instruments of his punishments upon the chosen people. And this was accomplished under such peculiar circumstances of manifest intention and instrumentality, that the conquerors themselves were brought to acknowledge the supremacy of Jehovah, and that they had been but the blind agents of his will. The strong and marked interference to prevent "the great kings" from engrossing to themselves the merit or glory of their victories, and from despising the God of the people who, for their sins, had been abased at *their* footstool, even extorted from these proud monarchs the avowal that they had received *all* their crowns and *all* their kingdoms from "the Most High God" whom the Hebrews worshipped. Now this and other results of the destitution of the Hebrews as strongly, and perhaps more strikingly, subserved the great object of keeping alive in the world the knowledge of a Supreme and *Universal* Governor and Creator, as by maintaining the Hebrews in Palestine. Indeed, that this great truth was diffused among, and impressed upon, the conquering nations by the captivity of the Hebrews—that "the Lord's song" was not sung utterly in vain in a strange land by the captives who wept when they remembered Zion, under the willows and beside the waters of Babylon—in short, that they received some salt which kept them from utter putrefaction, some leaven which wrought vitally in them and prepared them for the revelations which the "fulness of times" produced—is evinced by the history of Daniel, by the edicts of Nebuchadnezzar, of Darius, and, above all, of Cyrus; and may even be traced in the tradition which ascribes the doctrines and important reforms of Zoroaster to his intercourse with the Jewish captives and prophets at Babylon.

Thus, although they had forfeited the high destiny of preserving and propagating certain truths as an independent and sovereign people, the forfeiture extended only to

their own position, for the truths intrusted to them were still preserved and diffused through the instrumentality of their bondage and punishment. This was true even in the times posterior to their restoration to their own land.

We have been anxious to make these remarks, lest the facts of the history should seem to intimate that the Divine intention in the establishment of the Hebrew commonwealth was *frustrated* by the perversity of the people which rendered the subversion of that commonwealth necessary. Having, as we trust, shown that there is no room for this conclusion, it may seem better to reserve such further remarks as may tend to develope the spirit of the ensuing history, for the natural connection with the record of the circumstances in which they are involved. We now therefore proceed to record the captivities of Israel and of Judah.

When Jerusalem was destroyed, one hundred and ninety-four years had elapsed since the Israelites of Galilee and Gilead had been led away captive into Assyria; one hundred and thirty-three years since Shalmaneser had removed the ten tribes to Halah and Habor by the river Gozan, and to Hara and other cities of Media; and ten years since Nebuchadnezzar had banished some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to the river of Chebar. The determination of the sites to which the Israelites were removed is a matter of some interest, but one which, in a work like the present, does not require any large investigation. The interest lies in the means thus given of determining the district to which the Israelites were expatriated; and it is sufficient for us to state, that all the investigations which have yet been instituted, and all the information which has yet been acquired, concur in referring all these names (excepting, of course, the river Chebar) to that north-western part of the present Persian empire which formed the ancient Media. It is, indeed, remarkable that the only other cities whose names occur in the history of the captivity of the ten tribes, are Rhages and Ecbatana, which we know to have been important cities of Media, in both of which it appears that the expatriated Israelites were settled in considerable numbers.

Even this much it is important to learn; because of itself it throws much light upon the policy of the Assyrian conquerors, and upon the position which the removed Israelites ultimately occupied. Media was then subject to the Assyrian empire, although still chiefly *occupied* by the native Medes; it seems, therefore, to have been the policy of the Assyrians to remove the inhabitants of one conquered country to another conquered country, with the view of weakening the separate interest or nationality of both, and of promoting such a fusion of races and nations as might tend to realise tranquillity and permanence to the general empire. From this allocation of the expatriated Israelites in Media results the important fact that, whereas Judah was always subject to the conquering nation, Israel was only so for a short time, as the Medes, among whom they were placed, were not long in asserting their independence of Assyria, which empire they (with the Babylonians) ultimately subverted, and continued independent of the great Babylonian empire which succeeded, and to which the captives of Judah were subject. So, then, the relations of the ten tribes were with the Medes, not with the Assyrians or Babylonians; and their relations with the Medes were not, and were necessarily far better than, those between captives and conquerors. It does not appear how the Medes could regard them, or that they did regard them, otherwise than as useful and respectable colonists whom the common oppressor had placed among them, and whose continued presence it was desirable to solicit and retain. It is hard to call this a captivity; but since it is usually so described, it is important to remark that the captivity of the ten tribes and that of Judah was under different, and independent, and not always friendly, states. There is a vague notion that, since the Babylonians subverted and succeeded the Assyrians, the Israelites, who had been captives to the Assyrians, became such to the Babylonians, and were afterwards joined in that captivity by their brethren of

Judah; but this, as we have seen, was by no means the case.

The information we possess respecting the condition of the ten tribes, before and after the fall of Jerusalem, is exceedingly scanty. It is certain that during the long years which passed before Judah also was carried into captivity, the expatriated Israelites fully participated in all the extravagant hopes of their brethren in Judah, and were looking with sanguine expectations for a speedy restoration to their own land; and the adverse prophecies and declarations of Ezekiel were as little heeded by them as those of Jeremiah were at Jerusalem.

The apocryphal book of Tobit is the only source from which any information can be obtained as to the social position of the expatriated Israelites. We are certainly not among those who would like to repose much belief in "the stupid story of Tobias and his dog;" yet the *framework* of that story is so much in agreement with what we do know, and is so probable and natural in itself, that it would seem to have been "founded on facts," and to have been concocted by one who was intimately acquainted with the condition and affairs of the Israelites under the Assyrians.

From this it would appear, that many of the captives were stationed at Nineveh itself, where they would seem to have lived much like other citizens, and were allowed to possess or acquire considerable wealth. Among these was Tobit, of the tribe and city of Naphtali, a man who feared God, as doubtless many other of the captives did, and who, as far as in his power, squared his conduct by the rules and observances of the Mosaical law, and acquired such a character for probity, that the conqueror himself, Shalmaneser, took notice of him, and appointed him his purveyor. This promotion of one of the expatriated Hebrews is significant in its indications, as it shows that, as afterwards with their brethren in Babylon, offices of importance and profit were, under the Assyrians, open to the ambition, or rewarded the good conduct, of the Israelites. Tobit availed himself of his position to visit his brother Israelites in other cities, to cheer them, and to encourage their reasonable hopes and enterprises. He must have acquired considerable wealth, as he was enabled to deposit ten talents of silver* in the hands of Gabel of Rhages, in Media. That he did this may seem to imply that the captives stationed in Media were considered more securely circumstanced than those directly under the eye of the Assyrians. When Sennacherib returned from his signal overthrow in Palestine, he vented his ill-humour upon the Hebrew captives, and caused many of them to be put to death, and their bodies were cast forth, to remain unburied beyond the walls of Nineveh. This was very shocking to the pious Tobit, who made it a practice to inter by night the bodies of his brethren whom he found unburied. The absence of the bodies occasioned inquiry, and the truth came to the knowledge of the tyrant, who would have put him to death; but the good man received timely warning, and made his escape from Nineveh. The tyrant himself was soon slain by his own sons; and (another marked instance of promotion) his successor, Esarhaddon, appointed Achiacharus, Tobit's nephew, to be his "cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and overseer of the accounts." Through this person Tobit received permission to return to Nineveh. But he was reduced to comparative poverty, and total blindness was soon after added to his misfortunes. His nephew, Achiacharus, was kind to the family under these circumstances, until Tobit thought proper to remove into Elymais. There poverty was still their lot; and they were supported chiefly by the wife, Anna, who took in "woman's work," and sometimes obtained presents from her employers above her actual earnings.

At last Tobit, who had returned to Nineveh, bethought him of the valuable property he had left with Gabel at Rhages, and he sent his son to reclaim it, after giving him such instructions as shows that travelling was then, as almost ever since, dangerous in those countries. The romantic adventures of young Tobias on the journey form the most suspicious part of the book, perhaps the only suspicious part; for which reason,

* About 3750*l.*

as well as because it affords none of the illustration we require, we willingly pass it by. It may suffice to state that Tobias prospered in his journey. Tobit lived in Nineveh to the good old age of 158 years, and before his death foretold the approaching troubles of Assyria and the destruction of Nineveh, and that "for a time peace should rather be in Media," to which country he advised his son to withdraw. Tobias was mindful of this counsel, and withdrew to Ecbatana, where, in due time, he heard of the destruction of Nineveh by the combined forces of the Medes and Babylonians.

We have already stated the inferences as to the condition of the expatriated Israelites which this narrative opens, although we have no information as to their condition after the fall of Nineveh and during the contemporary captivity of Judah. But there is every reason to conclude that their position under the Medes, when Media became an independent and well-governed state, was even less disadvantageous and unequal than it had been when that country was part of the Assyrian empire.

We have brought the history of the kingdom of Judah down to the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the country. But the history of the captivity must take us back to an earlier date, even to the time when Nebuchadnezzar spoiled the temple of its costly utensils, and sent away to Babylon a number of young princes and nobles as hostages for the fidelity of the people and their new king. This was eleven years before the fall of Jerusalem.

Among these captives were Daniel, and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These, as tokens of their enslaved condition, received Chaldean names, more familiar than their own to the organs of the conquering people. Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego. These were, among others of the most promising of the youths, selected to be educated in the palace for three years, under the charge of the chief of the eunuchs, in the learning and language of the Chaldeans, to qualify them for holding offices about the court and in the state. At the end of that time they were brought before the king to be examined as to their proficiency, when the young persons named were, in all matters of wisdom and understanding, ... "found [to be] ten times better [informed] than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." They were accordingly admitted to a place in that learned body.

Seventeen years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second year after the devastation of Egypt, when all his enemies were subdued on every side, and when his rule extended over many nations, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which left a profound impression upon his mind, but the details of which he was unable to recover when he awoke. He therefore sent for all the magi and astrologers, requiring that by their occult skill and pretended influence with the gods, they should not only interpret but recover the dream he had lost. This they avowed themselves unable to do; whereupon the enraged and disappointed king commanded them to be massacred. Daniel and his friends were sought for, to be included in this doom; but Daniel, being informed of the cause, repaired to the royal presence, and promised that, if further time were allowed, he would undertake that the dream and an interpretation should be found. To this the king willingly agreed; and the pious youths betook themselves to fasting and prayer, in the hope that God would enable them to satisfy the king's demand. Nor was their expectation disappointed. The matter was made known to Daniel in a vision. He was then enabled to remind the king that he had seen in his dream a compound image, and to inform him that this image represented "what should come to pass hereafter." In this compound image, the *head of pure gold* denoted Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the succeeding kings of the Babylonian dynasty; *the breast and arms of silver*, indicated the succeeding but inferior empire of the Medes and Persians; *the belly and thighs of brass*, the next following empire of the Macedonians and the Greeks, whose arms were brass; *the legs of iron*, and *the toes*

partly iron and partly clay, referred to the Roman empire, which should be strong as iron, but the kingdoms into which it would ultimately subdivide, composed of heterogeneous materials, which should be partly strong and partly weak; and, lastly, *the* STONE *smiting the image and filling the whole earth*, denoted the kingdom of Christ, which was to be set up upon the ruins of these temporal kingdoms and empires, and was destined to fill the whole earth, and to stand or continue for ever. "Thou art this head of gold," said the prophet to the king; but he did not indicate the names and sources of the succeeding, and then non-existent, empires with equal distinctness. But we know them, not only from the order in which they succeed, and from the characters ascribed to them, but from the subsequent visions of Daniel himself, in which these empires are distinctly named, and by which the meaning of this primary vision is gradually unfolded, and which form together one grand chain of prophecy, extending to the end of time, and so clear and distinct, that as much of them (nearly the whole) as is already fulfilled, and which was once a shadowing forth of the future, reads like a condensed history of past ages.

From the first, Daniel had disclaimed any peculiar pretensions to wisdom. "There is," he said, "a God in heaven that revealeth secrets;" and to Him he not only referred all the credit of the interpretation, but plainly told the king that it was to the appointments of this "God in heaven," who had the supreme disposal of all events, that *he* owed all the kingdoms which he ruled. Here was a grand instance of that testimony for Jehovah to which, when introducing this chapter, we had occasion to advert. The king was much struck by it, so that, while he prostrated himself before Daniel as before a superior, he acknowledged that the God who could enable him to reveal this great secret was indeed the God of gods and Lord of kings. Who does not see that it was for the purpose of impressing this conviction that the dream was given to him, the forgetfulness inflicted, and the interpretation bestowed on Daniel?

Nebuchadnezzar was not slow in rewarding the distinguished qualities which the prophet exhibited. He appointed him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and, at the same time, "chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (*Rab-Mag*, or *Archimagus*, Jer. xxxix. 3), two of the highest civil and scientific offices in the state. At his request also, his three friends were appointed to conduct under him in the affairs of his provincial government, while he himself took a high place, if not the first place, in the civil councils of the king.

The services of Daniel and his friends proved too valuable to be dispensed with; but mature deliberation disgusted the king at his dream and its interpretation, and his pride disposed him to retract the acknowledgment he had made of the supremacy of the God of a conquered people. It was, as we apprehend, under this influence that he erected a great image, of which not the head only, but the whole figure was of gold*, to denote the *continuance* of his empire, in opposition to his dream; and it was dedicated to the tutelary god Bel, or Belus, whose power he now considered superior to that of the God of the Hebrews; whereby, in the most offensive manner, he revoked his former concession. All men were commanded to worship this, and no other god, on pain of death; in consequence of which, the three friends of Daniel, who continued their worship of Jehovah, with their faces turned towards Jerusalem, and took no notice of the golden image, were seized, and cast into an intensely-heated furnace. But by the special and manifest interposition of the God they served, they were delivered without a hair of their heads being injured, by which fact the king, who was present, was constrained to confess that the God of the Hebrews, who could after this sort deliver his people, was unquestionably superior to all others.

* This was probably the statue of solid gold, twelve cubits high, which, according to Herodotus, stood in the temple of Belus, until it was taken away by Xerxes. The height mentioned by Daniel, sixty cubits, probably included the pedestal or pillar on which it stood, as otherwise its height would have been disproportionate to its breadth, six cubits.

Nebuchadnezzar manifestly was endowed with many great and generous qualities; but he was spoiled by prosperity, while, by the very aggrandisement which exalted his pride, he had been fixed in a position which made it necessary to the Divine glory that he should be brought to, and kept in, the acknowledgment that in all his acts he had been but an instrument in the hands of the God worshipped by one of the nations which had received his yoke, and whose superiority at least, if not his unity, he was required to acknowledge.

In another dream he was forewarned of the consequences of his excessive pride. This dream Daniel unflinchingly interpreted; but whatever effect it might produce was of no long duration. Twelve months after, while contemplating his extensive dominion and the splendour to which he had raised the great city of Babylon, his heart swelled with kingly pride, and he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" While these words were in his mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken—The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times (years) shall pass over thee, *until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*" The thing was accomplished that very hour; and in this state he remained until "his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." The meaning of which seems to be that his proud mind was in that instant shattered, and fell into a kind of monomania, which made him fancy himself some animal; in consequence of which it was judged necessary by his physicians to humour his fancy by treating him as such, and by allowing him within certain limits to act as such. The sequel cannot be more emphatically told than in his own words, as found in an edict, recounting these circumstances, which he issued on his recovery. "At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour, the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: *and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*" This noble acknowledgment demonstrates our former argument, that care was taken by Jehovah to maintain his own honour, and to secure his own great objects notwithstanding, and indeed *through*, that bondage to which sin had reduced his people.

After a long reign of 43 years, Nebuchadnezzar died in 561, and was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach. A Jewish tradition* reports that this prince behaved so ill, by provoking a rupture with the Medes, during the distraction of his father, that Nebuchadnezzar, on his recovery, threw him into prison; and that he there became acquainted with, and interested in, Jehoiachim, the imprisoned king of Judah. However this be, it is certain that one of the first acts of his reign was to release Jehoiachim from his long imprisonment of thirty-seven years; and during the remainder of his life he treated him with much distinction and kindness, giving him a place at his court and table above all the other captive kings then in Babylon. As, however, the text implies that he died before his benefactor, who himself survived but three years, the Hebrew king could not long have outlived his release. Evil-Merodach was slain in a

* Noticed by Jerome on Isa. xiv.

battle against the united Medes and Persians, who by this time had become very powerful by their junction and intermarriages. The combined force was on this occasion commanded by young Cyrus, who had already begun to distinguish himself, and who had been appointed to this command by his uncle and father-in-law Cyaxares—"Darius, the Mede" of Scripture—king of the Medes. This was in 558 B.C.

Evil-Merodach was succeeded by his son Belshazzar. The *end* only of this monarch's reign is noticed in Scripture; but Xenophon* gives instances of his earlier conduct in the throne, of which only a barbarous and jealous tyrant could have been capable. His last and most heinous offence was the profanation of the sacred vessels belonging to the Jerusalem temple, which his illustrious grandfather, and even his incapable father, had respected. Having made a great feast "to a thousand of his lords," he ordered the sacred vessels to be brought, that he and his wassailers might drink wine from them. That there was an intentional insult to the Most High in this act, transpires in the narrative:—"They praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone;" but THE GOD in whose hand was their breath, and whose were all their ways, they praised or glorified not. Indeed, to appreciate fully this act and its consequences, it is indispensably necessary that the mind should revert to the operations by which the supremacy of Jehovah was impressed upon Nebuchadnezzar—operations not hid in a corner; and which, together with the public confessions and declarations of this conviction which were extorted from that magnanimous king, must have diffused much formal acquaintance with the name and claims of Jehovah among the Babylonians, with which also the royal family must have been in a peculiar degree familiar, not only through these circumstances, but through Daniel, who had occupied high rank at court in the still recent reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and whose mere presence must constantly have suggested the means to which his advancement was owing. From this it will be seen that, on the principle of operation which we have indicated in the early part of this chapter, the time was now come for another act whereby Jehovah might vindicate the honour of his own great Name, and enforce his peculiar and exclusive claims to the homage of mankind.

Suddenly a mysterious hand appeared, writing conspicuously upon the wall words of ominous import, but which no one could understand; for, although they were in the vernacular Chaldean language, the character in which they were written was the primitive old Hebrew, which differed totally from the Chaldee, and was the original from which that which is called the Samaritan character was formed. The king himself was greatly agitated, and commanded the instant attendance of the magi and astrologers. They came, but were utterly unable to divine the meaning of the portentous words upon the wall. This increased the terror of the impious king, which was at its height when the queen-mother, or rather grand-mother* made her appearance. She soothed the troubled monarch, and reminded him of the services and character of Daniel; indicating him as one "in whom is the spirit of THE HOLY GOD; and in the days of thy grandfather light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him;" and therefore one who was likely to afford Belshazzar the satisfaction which he sought. It was probably the custom at Babylon (as with respect to the corresponding officer in other Oriental courts) for the archimagus to lose his office on the death of the king to whose court he was attached; and that, consequently, Daniel had withdrawn into private life on the death of Nebuchadnezzar. This will explain how the king needed to be reminded of him, and how the prophet was in the first instance absent from among those who were called to interpret the writing on the wall.

Daniel was sent for: and when he appeared, the king repeated what he had heard of him; stated the inability of the magicians

* 'Cyrop.' i. 4.

* So she is called by Josephus, ἡ μαμμη αυτου; indeed, the part she took on this occasion is so probable of no one as of the widow of Nebuchadnezzar.

to interpret the portentous words; and promised him, as the reward of interpretation, that he should be clad in scarlet, with a chain of gold about his neck, and that he should rank as the third person in the kingdom. The venerable prophet modestly waived the proffered honours and rewards, as having no weight to induce his compliance:—"Thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king." But, first, he undauntedly reminded the king of the experience, and resulting convictions of his renowned grandfather, adding, with emphasis, "And thou, his grandson, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knowest all this." He then read the inscription:—

"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, [PERES],
Number, Number, Weight, [*Division*]
UPHARSIN."
and Divisions,

and proceeded to give the interpretation:—

"MENE, God hath *numbered* thy kingdom, and

"[MENE], *finished* it*.

"TEKEL, Thou art *weighed* in the balances, and art found wanting.

"PERES, Thy kingdom is *divided.*

"UPHARSIN, *And* given to the Medes and Persians" [Darius and Cyrus].

The king heard this terrible sentence: but made no remark further than to command that Daniel should be invested with the promised scarlet robe and golden chain, and that the third rank in the kingdom should be assigned to him.

The sacred historian adds, with great conciseness, "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." *How*, we are not told: but we may collect from Xenophon† that he was slain through the conspiracy of two nobles, on whom he had inflicted the greatest indignities which men could receive. This was in 553 B.C., in the fifth year of his reign.

He was succeeded by his son, a boy, named Laborosoarchod‡; but as he was put out of the way in less than a year, he is passed over in Ptolemy's Canon, as well as in the Sacred history, which relates that, as following the death of Belshazzar, "Darius the Mede took the kingdom." In fact, the family of Nebuchadnezzar being extinct, Cyaxares, or (to give him his Scriptural name) Darius, who was brother to the queen-mother, and the next of kin by her side to the crown, had the most obvious right to the vacant throne; and while his power was so great as to overawe all competition, the express indication of him by the prophet in his interpretation of the inscription was calculated to have much weight with all concerned, and indeed with the whole nation.

Daniel, naturally, came into high favour with Darius, to whose accession he had so materially contributed. On making out new appointments of the governors of provinces, the prophet was set over them all: and the king contemplated a still further elevation for him. This excited the dislike and jealousy of the native princes and presidents, who determined to work his ruin. In his administration, his hands were so pure, that no ground of accusation could be found against him. They therefore devised a plan by which Daniel's known and tried fidelity to his religion should work his destruction. They procured from the careless and vain king a decree, that no one should for thirty days offer any prayer or petition to any god or man save the king himself, under pain of being cast into the lion's den. The king at once became painfully conscious of his weak and criminal conduct, when his most trusted servant, Daniel, was accused before him as an open transgressor of this decree, and his punishment demanded. Among the Medes and Persians there was a singular restraint upon despotism—which, while at the first view it seemed to give intensity to the exercise of despotic power, really tended to deter the kings from hasty and ill-considered decisions, by compelling them to feel the evil consequences with which they were attended. The king's word was irrevocable law. He could not himself dispense with the consequences of his own acts. Of this Darius was reminded; and he saw at once that he was

* The repetition merely giving emphasis to the signification, indicating its *certainty* and *speedy* accomplishment.
† 'Cyrop.' lib. vii.
‡ Joseph. cont. Apion, i. 20.

precluded from interfering in behalf of his friend. It is a beautiful illustration of the great truth, which appears as the main argument of this chapter, namely, that the glory of God was promoted among the heathen by the captivity of his people,—that the king himself was already so well acquainted with the character and power of JEHOVAH, that he spontaneously rested himself upon the hope, that, although unable himself to deliver him from this well-laid snare, the God whom Daniel served would certainly not suffer him to perish. The prophet was cast into the lion's den, and the mouth thereof was closed with a sealed stone. The king spent the night sleepless and in sorrow. Impelled by his vague hopes, he hastened early in the morning to the cavern, and cried in a doleful voice, "O Daniel, servant of THE LIVING GOD, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" To the unutterable joy and astonishment of the king, the quiet voice of Daniel returned an affirmative answer, assuring the king of his perfect safety. Instantly the cavern was opened, the servant of God drawn forth, and his accusers were cast in, and immediately destroyed by the savage inmates of the den. This striking interposition induced the king to issue a proclamation, to the same ultimate effect as that which Nebuchadnezzar had issued in a former time. He wrote unto "all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth," charging them to "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is THE LIVING GOD, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end." It would not be easy to overrate the importance of the diffusion of such truths as these through the length and breadth of the Median empire.

It was the established policy of the Medes and Persians to conciliate the good will of the subject states, by leaving the practical government in the hands of native princes. Darius, therefore, as we may collect from Berosus, appointed Nabonadius, a Babylonian noble, unconnected with the royal family, to be viceroy, or king, under him. This appointment was confirmed or continued by Cyrus, when he succeeded to the general empire on the death of his uncle, in 551 B.C.

During the first years of his reign, Cyrus was too much occupied in foreign wars to pay much attention to Babylon; and this gave Nabonadius an opportunity to assert his independence, and to maintain it until the hero was at leisure to call him to account. This was not until 538 B.C., when this great prince marched against Babylon with the determination to crown his many victories by its reduction. Nabonadius, on his part, seems to have been encouraged by his diviners* to repose much confidence in his own resources, and in the stability of the kingdom he had established. He ventured to meet the Persian army on its advance towards the city, but was defeated in a pitched battle, and driven back to abide a siege within the walls of Babylon. Still all was not lost, for not only was the city strongly fortified, but a siege by blockade was likely to be indefinitely protracted, as the town not only possessed immense stores of provisions, but the consumption of them would be greatly lessened by means of the large open spaces within the city, in which all kinds of produce could be raised to a considerable extent. In fact, the siege continued for two years, and Babylon was then only taken by a remarkable stratagem. Cyrus observed that the town lay the most exposed on the side of the river, and therefore he caused a new bed to be dug for its waters; and at an appointed time, by night, the dykes were cut, and the Euphrates rolled its humbled stream into this new channel; and the old one, left dry, offered a free passage to the exulting Persians. Even yet, however, their condition, in the bed of the river, might have been perilous, and a vigilant enemy might have surprised them as in a net; but that night a public festival was celebrated in Babylon, and all there was confusion and drunkenness. From this, as well as from the little reason to apprehend danger on that side, the gates leading from the quays into the city were that night left open, so that an easy and unopposed access was offered to the army of Cyrus, and the

* Isa. xliv. 25.

king was horror-struck and paralysed, as successive messengers arrived in haste from the various distant quarters of the city, to inform him that the Persians had entered there, and thus to learn, that, at both extremities at once, great Babylon was taken, 536 B.C.

Daniel was still alive, and there is evidence that Cyrus knew and valued his character. The apocryphal history of Bel and Dragon says that Cyrus conversed much with him, and honoured him above all his friends. But we have better evidence in *effects* which, seeing Daniel still lived, may very safely be, in some degree, referred to the instruction and counsel which the now very aged prophet was able to give.

There is an important and most striking prophecy by Isaiah*, in which Cyrus is mentioned by name, and his exploits predicted, *more than a century before his birth*. To him it is expressly addressed, and in terms of tenderness and respect, which were never, in any other instance, applied to an heathen—if it be just to apply that name to Cyrus. In this splendid prophecy Jehovah calls Cyrus "my shepherd, who shall perform all my pleasure;" and "mine anointed." His victories are foretold, and ascribed to Jehovah; and, in a particular manner, the taking of Babylon by him is foreshown, even to the indication of the very peculiar manner in which that conquest was achieved. And the *object* of all this—of his existence, of his acts, and even of this prophecy concerning him and them,—is declared, with marked emphasis, to be, that he may be in a condition to restore the captivity of Judah, and that such convictions might be wrought in him as might incline him to fulfil this his vocation†, and to become acquainted with the supreme and sole power of Jehovah. And the careful reader will not fail to note in this sublime address to one destined to live in a future generation, not only a clear assertion of the unity of God, and his universal power and providence, but a distinct blow at the peculiar superstition of Cyrus and his people—which consisted in the adoration of two principles—the good and evil, represented by light and darkness. Hence the emphasis of—

"I form the light, and create darkness;
I make peace, and create evil."

We can easily imagine the impression which the perusal of these prophecies would make upon the ingenuous mind of this great man, accompanied by the explanations which Daniel could pour into his willing ears, and with the further intimation, collected from the prophecies of Jeremiah respecting the seventy years of the captivity, that the time of the restoration was then arrived, and himself the long pre-determined instrument of giving effect to the Divine intention. His consciousness of all this is evinced in the proclamation, which he issued the same year that Babylon was taken. This proclamation is to be regarded as the final acknowledgment from the conquering foreign kings of the supremacy of Jehovah, and it was most interesting from the distinctness with which this acknowledgment is conveyed,—"Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia,—JEHOVAH, the God of the heavens, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah."‡ In this he manifestly alludes to the charge conveyed in the prophecy—

That call thee by name, am the God of Israel.
For the sake of Jacob my servant,
And of Israel my chosen one,
I have even called thee by name:
I have surnamed thee, yet Me thou knowest not.
I am JEHOVAH, and *there is none else:*
There is no God besides me.
I girded thee though thou hast not known me;
That they may know, from the rising of the sun,
And from the west, that *there is none beside me.*
I am JEHOVAH, and *there is none else:*
I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace, and create evil.
I, JEHOVAH, *do all these things.*

* Isa. xliv. 24, to xlv. 6.

† "Thus saith Jehovah of his anointed,—
Of Cyrus, whose right hand I hold fast,
That I may subdue nations before him,
And ungird the loins of kings;
That I may open before him the valves,
And the gates shall not be shut.
I myself will march on before thee,
And will make the crooked places straight.
The valves of brass will I break asunder,
And the bars of iron will I hew down.
And I will give to thee the treasures of darkness,
And stores deeply hid in secret places;
That thou mayest know that I, JEHOVAH,

‡ Ezra, i. 2.

"Who [JEHOVAH] saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd!
And he shall perform all my pleasure;
Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
To the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid."

Accordingly, the proclamation proceeded not only to grant free permission for such of the seed of Abraham as thought proper to return to their own land, but also commanded the authorities of the places in which they lived to afford every facility to their re-migration.

Before accompanying them on their return, it may be well to contemplate the results of the circumstances which have been related, as affecting the position of the captive Jews *during* the period through which we have passed.

There is certainly nothing to suggest that their condition was one of abject wretchedness. This is in some degree shown by the high offices enjoyed by Daniel and his three friends; and by the distinction conferred upon king Jehoiachim by Evil-Merodach. He not only enjoyed the first rank over all the kings then at Babylon, but ate at the table of the monarch, and received allowances corresponding to his rank. While these circumstances of honour must have reflected a degree of dignity on the exiles, sufficient to protect them from being ill-treated or despised; we see that there was always some person of their nation high in favour and influence at court, able to protect them from wrong, and probably to secure for them important and peculiar privileges. They, most likely, came to be considered as respectable colonists, enjoying the peculiar protection of the sovereign. Although Jehoiachim did not long survive his release from prison, his son Salathiel, and his grandson, Zerubbabel, undoubtedly partook in and succeeded to the respect which he received. If the story in the apocryphal book of Esdras*, of the discussion before Darius, in which Zerubbabel won the prize, be a mere fiction, it is still at least probable that the young prince, although he held no office, had free access to the court; which privilege must have afforded him many opportunities of alleviating the condition of his countrymen. It is even not improbable that (as is implied in the apocryphal story of Susannah, and as the tradition of the Jews affirm,) the exiles had magistrates and a prince from their own number. Jehoiachim, and after him Salathiel and Zerubbabel, might have been regarded as their princes, in the same manner as Jozadak and Jeshua were as their high-priests.

At the same time it cannot be denied that their humiliation, as a people punished by their God, was always extremely painful, and frequently drew on them expressions of contempt. The peculiarities of their religion afforded many opportunities for the ridicule and scorn of the Babylonians and Chaldeans,—a striking example of which is given in the profanation of the sacred vessels by Belshazzar. By such insults they were made to feel so much the more sensibly the loss of their houses, their gardens, and fruitful fields; the leaving of their capital and temple, and the cessation of the public solemnities of their religion†.

* 1 Esd. iii. 4.

† See Jahn, theil ii. band 1, sect. 45, 'Zustand der Hebräer in dem Exilium.'

CHAPTER II.

THE RESTORATION.

We consider the great argument of the preceding chapter to have been, that the honour of Jehovah was as adequately maintained, and the knowledge of his claim to be the supreme and *only* God to have been even more diffused, by the destitution of the Hebrews, than it would ever have been by their continuance in their own land. It also appears very clearly to us that, by a succession of such operations as those which elicited the public acknowledgments of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius and Cyrus, and by acts which could not but be known to many nations, these objects might have been promoted as well without as by the restoration of the Hebrew people to their own land, and the re-establishment of the temple service. It may then be asked, why it was expedient that Judah should be at all restored; and, being restored, why Israel—the ten tribes—were not? These interesting questions we cannot discuss to the extent which they deserve; but we may suggest, that since, by immutable promises, the privilege had been secured to the seed of Abraham of upholding the standard of divine truth in the world, until "the fulness of times," and since the nationality of Judah *until then* had been anciently secured by the guarantee of the Lord's promise,—it was necessary that a restricted restoration, after punishment and correction, should for these purposes take place. This was all the more necessary, as it was from Judah and from the royal house of David that, as was well known, *He* was to spring who was to enlighten and redeem the world, and to bring in that new creation for which the moral universe groaned as the times advanced to their completion. For his identity, as the Ransomer promised of old, it was necessary that the dying struggles of the Hebrew nationality should not be yet permitted to terminate. And further, inasmuch as the bondage of the Hebrews east of the Euphrates had tended in no small degree to advance in that quarter the knowledge of the great preparatory principles of which the Jews were the commissioned conservators, it remained for the west to be in like manner allowed to catch such glimmerings of light, as might make the nations impatient of their blindness, and prepare them to hail with gladness the future "day-spring from on high." And this was, in fact, accomplished by the intercourse of the Hebrews with the western nations—Egypt, Syria, Asia-Minor, Greece, Rome—in subjection, in conflicts, or in commerce.

That Judah was preferred to this vocation, and that the Ten Tribes were not nationally or formally restored, must be accounted for by the further development of a consideration to which the reader's attention was called in the preceding chapter. The political sins of Judah were there traced to the disposition to lean rather upon men than upon institutions. The sin of Israel was even greater, and merited greater severity of punishment. *There*, not only was the same disposition exhibited, but the institutions themselves were corrupted, alienated, tortured from the objects for which they were expressly framed, and, with most culpable ingenuity, made subservient to the very circumstances against which they were designed to operate. In Judah, the building of God was indeed often neglected, often allowed to run to ruin; but it was not, as in Israel, made the abiding habitation of unclean and evil things. In Judah, a good king could purge out abuses and corrupt evils; but in Israel the tampering with institutions was so effective, that the best kings were unable to lay an improving finger on them. For these things Israel was thrown loose from the mercies of God much sooner than Judah; and the evil

had been so heinous and deeply rooted, that no promise or hope of restoration was held forth, nor did any take place.

By the attention which, through the captivity and consequent dispersion of the Jews among what was then (if we except Egypt) the most civilized nation of the world, had been directed to the majesty and providence of Jehovah, we consider that a very important part of the mission confided to the Hebrews was accomplished; for an impression was made, the effects of which may without difficulty be traced to the time of Christ, and, therefore, we are thus brought to a sort of *end* in the national history of the Hebrew people. Undoubtedly, the real fall of Jerusalem was that which was wrought by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar; the real destruction was that which the Assyrians worked in the north, and the Babylonians in the south; and the real dispersion of the race was that which took place in consequence of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. A remnant only was preserved, as necessary for the remaining objects which have just been indicated; and it is the history of that REMNANT which forms the subject of the present book.

It is unquestionable that this remnant was highly fitted for its vocation. The large mass of the Israelites were natives of the land of their exile, in which they were for the most part so comfortably situated that only those whose religious zeal and sentiments were above the average warmth, would be likely to, or did, encounter the dangers of the desert and the inconveniences and anxieties of an unsettled country. The circumstances of the re-migration were in fact such as to attract only those who were in the soundest state of moral health. They were also cured of all danger of idolatry, and of all disposition to make light of their own institutions. That the Hebrews as a body profited largely by the correction which they had received, is unquestionable—so largely indeed, that, under temptations as great as any to which they had in former times yielded, idolatry was ever after their abhorrence. And indeed if, during the period of the Captivity, the proudest heathen were made so seriously attentive to the God of Israel, much more were the Hebrews likely to be awakened by the same events to be true to their own God. On this point we copy the remarks of Professor Jahn:—

"Among the Hebrews who, agreeably to the sanctions of the law, were punished for idolatry by total banishment from their native land, there were certainly many who did not worship idols; and probably not a few, in consequence of this national judgment, so often predicted, were brought to reflect on and to abhor the superstition which had been the cause of so great a calamity. Others, not wholly relinquishing idolatry, still retained a reverence for Jehovah. They never, like other transplanted nations, intermingled with the people among whom they were settled, but continued a peculiar race. There were doubtless individual exceptions; but the nation as such remained distinct. The intermingling with pagans, and that entire extinction of the Hebrews as a peculiar people which must have resulted from it, was prevented by the rite of circumcision, by the prohibition of many kinds of food allowed among other nations, by ceremonial impurities, and by various other institutions, designed to segregate and consequently to preserve the nation. These usages had by time become a second nature, so that any intimate connection with Gentiles was a matter of considerable difficulty. The ancient favours of Jehovah, the miraculous deliverances which he had vouchsafed exclusively to them, and the promises he had given them for futurity, were not easily forgotten. The fulfilment of so many prophecies respecting the fall of the Assyrian empire and of the city of Nineveh, respecting the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem, must have raised Jehovah in their eyes far above all idols; and the very punishment they were then suffering was well calculated to awaken reflection, and thus become a bitter but powerful antidote to their propensity to idolatry. Many Israelites, therefore, in Assyria and Media (as the book of Tobit testifies) persisted in the sincere worship of Jehovah; neither could the Jews in Babylon, and those by the river Chebar, fall easily into idolatry,

hile such men as Ezekiel and Daniel were onstantly and earnestly reminding them of ie God whom they were bound to serve.

"The prophecies of Ezekiel, relating for he most part to events near at hand, were ccomplished before the eyes of the unbe-.eving exiles; and every fulfilment was a ew proof that Jehovah, the author of these redictions, was the God and ruler of the vorld. Thus there were repeated opportu-ities to remind this superstitious people f Jehovah their God. The remarkable pro-hecy respecting the conquest and destruc-tion of the powerful city Tyre, which was so speedily accomplished, is particularly worthy of notice. By such striking accomplishments of the prophecies respecting occurrences near at hand, the belief of predictions of more dis-tant events was strengthened, and the eyes of the Hebrews were eagerly directed towards the future.

"Thus, and through the deliverance which Jehovah wrought in behalf of his persecuted servants,—and through the acknowledgments which were extorted from the pagan monarchs under whose yoke the necks of Israel and Judah were placed,—'God pursued them (so to speak) with the efficacious dealings of his providence, with miracles and prophecies, in order to compel them to preserve the true religion, and to place them in a situation in which it would hardly be possible for them to exchange the worship of the Creator and Governor of the world for the worship of idols. By the prophet Ezekiel*, Jehovah declares in so many words, that even if the Hebrews desired to become united with the heathen, it should not be done; and that he would himself find means effectually to prevent the execution of such a design.'"†

That the restoration to Palestine, which now took place, is, at least primarily, that of which the prophets delivered such glowing predictions, very few who carefully examine the subject will find reason to doubt. The more closely the matter is examined, the more clearly the details of the prophecy will be found to agree with *this* fulfilment. We are quite aware that the large terms and forcible expressions employed by the prophets have led all the Jews and many Christians into the expectation of a more brilliant and complete restoration than on this occasion took place. Our undertaking is, however, to record past events rather than to furnish the development of prophecies which may be deemed unfulfilled. That these prophe-cies have a further meaning beyond the literal and primary purport, we take to be evinced not only by the glowing language employed, but by the present condition of the Hebrew nation, "like a column left standing amid the wreck of worlds and the ruins of nature,"‡ in which they manifestly remain awaiting destinies yet to come; but that these destinies include the restoration and independent and happy settlement of the nation in Palestine, we hold to be con-siderably less certain *and less important* than has of late years been made to appear.

Now, by the decree of Cyrus, the mountains were made low and the valleys filled for the return of the Hebrews to their own land. But seeing that only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin—conventionally regarded as one tribe—formally returned to Palestine, it becomes an interesting question, What became of the other Ten Tribes?

As the invitation of Cyrus was directed to all the people of Jehovah, and proclaimed throughout his empire, there is every reason to conclude that not a few of the ten tribes returned to Palestine. Those who supposed they could improve their condition by re-moving, would attach themselves here and there to a caravan of merchants, and pro-ceed to the land of their fathers. But as they arrived one after another, and in small companies, their return is not particularly noticed in a history so concise. There might even have been many Israelites in the first great caravan under Zerubbabel; but, how-ever this may be, it is highly probable that the Israelites returned in considerable num-bers, as soon as they heard of the settle-ment and the prosperity of their brethren in Palestine. Most of these arrivals were probably subsequent to the close of the Old Testament canonical history, and when the

* Ezek. xx. 32—44.

† John, ii. 1, sect. 53, Rückkehr der zehen Stämme.

‡ 'Trans. of the Parisian Sanhedrim,' p. 68. 1807.

restored nation had acquired a somewhat settled form. But whether their return were early or late, it is certain that at least a portion of them did return, for the history of later periods mentions Israelites as settled in Galilee and Peræa* long before the time of Christ. But connecting themselves with the tribe of Judah, they finally lost the name of Israelites, and all Hebrews were indiscriminately designated as Jews.

But since many of the tribe of Judah chose to remain in the land of their exile, it is reasonable to suppose that still greater numbers of the Israelites who had lived in those countries 200 years longer, would feel little inclination to exchange the comforts which they there enjoyed for the uncertain advantages of Palestine. But as the jealousy between Judah and Israel had now ceased, according to the predictions of the prophets, those Israelites also who remained in exile joined themselves to the tribe of Judah, which was in possession of the temple, and, consequently, they too received the denomination of Jews.

On these grounds Professor Jahn conceives that all questions and investigations for the purpose of ascertaining what has become of the Ten Tribes, and whether it is likely they will ever be discovered, are superfluous and idle. We are not ourselves quite so clear that this is the case. We grant, indeed, that there is no good reason for expecting to find the remnant of the ten tribes *as distinct* from the remnant of Judah; but that traces of the Hebrews of *both* captivities, without distinction of tribes, may be found in the countries in which they were so long located, there is much reason to conclude. We say *in* those countries, for the reasons which prevented them from returning to Palestine were as operative in preventing their migration in any other direction. Indeed, while the second temple stood, one would expect that such of them as were disposed to migrate at all, would return to the land of their fathers, as many of them, no doubt, did. But, apart from this preference, there was much reason for their remaining in Media; for the empire which comprehended that country continued long to be possessed by a nation which was quite able to protect them and make their homes secure; while the religion which it professed was more in agreement with that of Moses, and less revolting to the peculiar notions of the Hebrews, than any other they could find in the world. It is certain also, that for a long course of ages a large remnant of the captivity of Judah remained in Babylonia, and this so much composed of the *élite* of the nation as to secure the respect of the Jews who returned to Palestine and multiplied there—all traces of which estimation of the Babylonian Jews is not even at this day wholly obliterated; and this fact would suggest the probability of a similar local fixity of the ten tribes in Media and Assyria. Indeed the probability is the greater, from the fact that in those countries, as history proves, they would be much less liable to be disturbed by wars and troubles than the Jews of Babylonia. It is probably, under such a class of impressions, that the Jews themselves have generally been disposed to look for traces of the ten tribes in that direction. Nor, as it would appear, has the search been quite abortive.

In the twelfth century of Christ, the district of Halah, mentioned at p. 379, was visited by the Spanish Jew, Benjamin of Tudela. After speaking of large congregations of Jews in this quarter, he comes to Amaria [which Major Rawlinson regards as the same as Halah, now Holwan], where he found 25,000 Jews. "This congregation forms part of those," says Rabbi Benjamin, "who live in the mountains of Chaphton, which amount to more than 100, extending to the frontiers of Media. These Jews are descendants of those who were originally led into captivity by king Shalmaneser. They speak the Syriac language, and among them are many excellent talmudic scholars."† Benjamin then gives the history of the false Messiah, David El Roy, who sprang from the city of Amaria, and whose romantic history has been made familiar to the English public by Mr. D'Israeli.

* 1 Mac. v. 9—24.

† 'The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela.' Translated and edited by A. Asher. Berlin, 1840.

More recently, the Rabbi David D'Beth Hillel has much obscure and dispersed talk about the fragments of the tribes which he found in the same quarter. But the following statement by Major Rawlinson will give greater satisfaction to the reader:—

"If the Samaritan captives can be supposed to have retained to the present day any distinct individuality of character, perhaps the Kalhurs, who are believed to have inhabited from the remotest antiquity those regions around Mount Zagros, preserve in their name the title of Calah [Halah]. They state themselves to be descended from Roham, or Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of the Jews,—perhaps an obscure tradition of their real origin. They have many Jewish names among them, and, above all, their general physiognomy is strongly indicative of an Israelitish descent. The Iliyát of this tribe now mostly profess Mohammedanism; but a part of them, together with the Gurans, who acknowledge themselves to be an offset of the Kalhurs, and most of the other tribes of the neighbourhood, are still of the 'Alí-Iláhí persuasion—a faith which bears evident marks of Judaism, singularly amalgamated with Sabæan, Christian, and Mohammedan legends. The tomb of Baba Yadgar, in the pass of Zardah, is regarded as their holy place; and this, at the time of the Arab invasion of Persia, was regarded as the abode of Elias. The 'Alí-Iláhís believe in a series of successive incarnations of the godhead, amounting to a thousand and one, Benjamin, Moses, Elias, David, Jesus Christ, Ali, and his tutor Salman, a joint development, the Imám Huseïn, and the Haf-tan (the seven bodies), are considered the chief of these incarnations. The Haf-tan were seven Pirs, or spiritual guides, who lived in the early ages of Islam, and each, worshipped as the Deity, is an object of adoration in some particular part of Kurdistan—Baba Yadgar was one of these. The whole of the incarnations were thus regarded as one and the same person, the bodily form of the Divine manifestations being alone changed; but the most perfect development is supposed to have taken place in the persons of Benjamin, David, and Ali." Referring to the passage already adduced from Rabbi Benjamin, the Major notices that he appears to have considered the whole of these Alí-Iláhís as Jews, and remarks, "it is possible that in his time their religion was less corrupted."*

Abandoning this subject for the present, we may now be allowed to return to the historical narrative.

All obstacles being removed, and every facility afforded, Zerubbabel, the grandson of king Jehoiachim, and Jeshua, a grandson of the high-priest Jozadak, with ten of the principal elders, prepared themselves for the journey home. The number of the remnant who joined these heads of the nation was, in round numbers, 50,000, including 7337 male and female servants†. This large body was composed chiefly, it would seem, of members of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, although the comparatively high number of the re-migrants supports the probability that a considerable proportion were of the ten tribes. The prophet Daniel, who must at this time have been about ninety years old, remained at the court of Cyrus, where he could probably render much more service to his nation than by returning to Palestine.

Those who were to return assembled from all quarters at an appointed place, according to the usual method of collecting a caravan, furnished with provisions and other things necessary for the journey. Their camels, horses, and beasts of burden amounted to 8136. Zerubbabel, on whom devolved the serious responsibility of directing this immense caravan, received from Cyrus the sacred vessels of the temple, and was entrusted with the very large contributions towards the re-building of the sacred edifice made by those of the Hebrew race who chose to remain behind. Zerubbabel was not only appointed leader or sheikh of the caravan, but the office of governor of Judea was entrusted to him. This appointment may probably be attributed not more to the circumstance which inclined Cyrus to show peculiar favour to the nation, than to the general policy of the Persian kings in leaving

* 'Geographical Journal,' vol. ix. part 1, p. 36.

† The number of the congregation was 42,360, which, with 7337 servants, makes 49,697.

the governments of conquered provinces to native governors, whenever this could be done with safety. Several months were consumed in preparations for the journey; and encumbered as they were with baggage and young children, and therefore obliged to travel slowly, the journey itself occupied four months.

The "seventy years" of the captivity were completed by the time they arrived; and they were now to settle in their own land, governed by their own laws, and forming a distinct commonwealth. The Persian sovereignty was not a calamity but a benefit, from the protection and security which it gave to a colony as yet too weak for independence.

The people dispersed themselves on their arrival, in search of their native cities and of necessaries for their families. But in the following month, being the seventh of the Jewish year, they all assembled at Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. On this occasion an altar was reared upon the ruins of the temple, and the customary sacrifices were offered; and on this altar the daily morning and evening sacrifices were afterwards continued.

In the second month of the second year of their return, the people again assembled at Jerusalem, to lay the foundation of the Temple, the preparations for which, through the voluntary contributions of the people and the elders, were now completed. This was a most joyful occasion to all but the old people; and very loud were the shouts of gladness which were raised: but loud as were the sounds of rejoicing, they were neutralised by the wailings of the old people, who had seen "the holy and beautiful house" in which their fathers praised Jehovah; and who wept bitterly and loudly at the comparison: for they could perceive that the edifice would neither be so large, so magnificent, nor so richly ornamented as the temple of Solomon. It is true, as appears from the record found at Ecbatana in the time of Darius Hystaspes, that Cyrus had directed that the temple should be twice as large as that of Solomon, and that the expense should be defrayed from the royal treasury. But either the proper officers ha neglected to give effect to these orders, o the Jews were backward to avail themselve of the full extent of the monarch's bounty lest they should awaken the envy of the worshippers of Ormuzd, and expose them selves to their persecutions. From whateve cause, it is certain that they did not build the temple so large as the decree of Cyrus allowed*.

The Persian governors of Syria and Palestine offered no opposition to the settlement of the Jews in their own country, or to their proceedings there. No doubt, therefore, orders corresponding to the tenour of the decree under which the restoration took place, had been forwarded to them. This, indeed, is stated by Josephus; although such orders, being sent direct to the Persian magistrates, are not noticed by Ezra. But opposition, persevering and venomous, came from another and probably unexpected quarter. This was from the colonists whom the Assyrian kings had planted in the land of Israel, and who had intermarried with the remaining Israelites, and now formed one people with them under the name of Samaritans. It does not appear that the Samaritans were *at this time* completely purged of the idolatries which their fathers had brought from foreign lands; yet the measures employed to enlighten them with the knowledge of the true God seem gradually to have produced a considerable effect. The return of the Jews from their seventy years' captivity so clearly evinced the over-ruling Providence of Jehovah, that the Samaritans were extremely desirous to join in rebuilding his temple and celebrating his worship: "They came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, 'Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we have done sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither.'" This proposal was steadily rejected by the Jews: and, whatever their motives may have been, it is easy to discern important reasons in consequence of which this

* Ezra vi. 1—5.

rejection appears to have been subservient to the purposes of the Divine economy*.

Finding they could not prevail, the Samaritans used every means in their power to thwart the enterprise. Their influence at the Persian court appears to have been considerable, owing, perhaps, as Josephus suggests, to their claiming to be of Median and Persian origin. Through this influence they managed, during the latter days of Cyrus, who was either absent in foreign wars or not at leisure to attend to such provincial matters, to oppose such obstacles to the progress of the work that the people got disheartened, and discontinued the building. This discouragement continued during the succeeding reigns of Cambyses and of Smerdis the Magian; nor was the work resumed until the second year of Darius Hystaspes.

The proceedings of the Samaritans in this matter naturally excited the enmity of the Jews; and thus was laid the foundation of the hatred between the two nations, which new provocations continually increased, until, at last, all friendly intercourse between them was entirely discontinued.

Cyrus died seven years after the restoration of the Jews. The reigns of Cambyses his son, and of the usurping magian Smerdis (seven months) occupied together eight years. Darius Hystaspes, one of the seven nobles who slew the intrusive magian, was elected king, 521 B.C.

At Jerusalem, the people had by this time lost their zeal in a work which had been so much obstructed, and, counting from the destruction of the former temple instead of from the commencement of the Captivity, they argued that the time for the rebuilding of the sacred edifice had not yet arrived. But while they erected fine buildings for their own use, and bestowed much expense and labour on the mere ornamental parts of their own dwellings, this was obviously a mere pretence, and provoked the severe reproaches of the prophet Haggai, who attributed to this neglect the drought, and consequent failure of crops, which had then occurred; and was authorised to promise the blessings of plenty from the time they should recommence the building of the temple. And to neutralise the discouragements arising from the detractive or sorrowful comparisons of the old men who had seen the temple of Solomon, he was commissioned to deliver the celebrated prophecy:—

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts:—
Yet once more, and in a little while,
And I will shake the heavens and the earth,
And the sea and the dry land;
And I will shake all the nations,
And THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS shall come,
And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.
The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.
The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.
And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."—Hag. ii. 6—9.

The prophecies of Zechariah tended to the same objects as those of Haggai; and, in consequence of their forcible representations, the building of the temple was resumed with rekindled zeal. To this resumption of the work, after so long a suspension, the Samaritans succeeded in drawing the attention of Tatnai, the Persian general governor of Syria, who, being a man of impartial justice, determined to go himself to Jerusalem to investigate the matter. He there demanded the authority of the Jewish chiefs for their operations, and was referred by them to the edict of Cyrus. Tatnai sent a clear and rigidly-unbiassed report of the matter to the king, and did not deem it necessary to direct the present suspension of the work. The reference to the Persian court could not have been made

* "The intermixture of the Samaritans with the Jews might have rendered the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the family and birth of the Messiah less clear—might have re-introduced idolatry among the restored Jews, now completely abhorrent from it, and in various ways defeated the grand objects of Providence in selecting and preserving a peculiar people. In consequence of this rejection and the alienation it produced, the Jews probably became more vigilant in preserving the strictness, and the Samaritans more jealous in emulating the purity, of the Mosaic ritual. They became hostile, and therefore unsuspected, guardians and vouchers of the integrity of the sacred text, particularly of the Pentateuch. And while the Jews in general, blinded by their national prejudices, could see in the promised Messiah only a national and temporal deliverer, the Samaritans appear to have judged of his pretensions with more justice and success."—Dean Graves's 'Lectures on the Pentateuch,' p. 347. Fifth Edition, 1839.

under more favourable circumstances; for Darius was of a mild and just character; and, still more, was a devoted admirer of Cyrus, and disposed to pay the highest respect to his acts and intentions*. The king, on receiving the report of Tatnai, directed a search to be made among the archives of the kingdom. It was naturally sought at first among the records kept in the treasure house at Babylon. It was not found there; but a roll containing the edict was ultimately discovered in the record chamber of the palace at Achmetha (Ecbatana). It directed not only that the temple should be rebuilt, and of larger dimensions than before, but that the expenses should be defrayed out of the royal treasury. The king directed a copy of this edict to be forwarded to Tatnai, together with a letter, in which he was enjoined not to obstruct the building, but zealously to forward it, to defray the expenses out of the royal revenues accruing within his government, and also to furnish the priests with such animals as were necessary for the sacrifices, with wheat, salt, wine, and oil, from day to day, for the divine service.—"That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto THE GOD OF HEAVEN, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons." The letter concluded with an order (apparently levelled at the Samaritans), that whosoever obstructed the execution of the decree should be hanged, and their houses demolished: and an imprecation was added on all kings and people who should attempt to destroy the house of God.

This transaction gives a very favourable idea of the good order and efficient administration of the Persian government; while the concluding direction affords another and very important illustration of the honour which Jehovah had obtained for his name among the heathen through the eastward dispersion of the Hebrews. Indeed, the edict of Cyrus, which was on this occasion brought to light, contained such a declaration of reverence for, and dependence on, Jehovah, as alone could not but have had great weight upon the mind of Darius. It may be remarked, indeed, that Darius himself was a disciple and supporter of Zoroaster, the reformer of the Magian religion, who is supposed to have profited largely by his intercourse with the Hebrew captives and prophets in Babylon.

Under these favouring auspices, the work proceeded with renewed spirit; and four years after, being the sixth of Darius (516 B.C.) the temple was completed. It was dedicated with great solemnity, of which there has ever since been an annual commemoration in "The Feast of Dedication." In the following month the Passover was celebrated in a regular and solemn manner, for the first time since the restoration. The temple service was then re-established as before the Captivity; Jeshua, the high-priest, encouraging the other priests and the Levites by his example to attend to their peculiar duties.

The Jews appear to have been undisturbed during the remainder of the thirty-six years in which Darius reigned. It is possible, indeed, that some difficulty arose in the latter years of that reign from their relation to the Persian empire. Darius, whose whole reign was occupied in foreign and generally successful war, had then extended his operations westward. After the Persians had lost the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., Darius made immense preparations for renewing the war, which kept all Asia in a ferment for three years: in the fourth Egypt revolted, which occasioned the division of the army into two, one to act against Greece and the other against Egypt. But just as all preparations were completed, Darius died, B.C. 485. Now, as the rendezvous of the army in this expedition against Egypt was in the neighbourhood of the Hebrew territory, it is in every way likely that the Jews were obliged to participate in its operations; or it is possible that they obtained an exemption from personal service on condition of supplying the army with provisions.

* Hystaspes, the father of Darius, was high in the confidence and favour of Cyrus, and he (and very probably his son) could not but have known so eminent a person as Daniel when at the court of Susa. Indeed the wisdom of Daniel appears to have been a proverb (Ezek. xxviii. 3). It is remarkable that Hystaspes ultimately succeeded (under his son) to the very office of archimagus, or master of the Magians, which Daniel had formerly occupied.

Xerxes completed the intentions of his father as to Egypt, which he succeeded in again bringing under the Persian yoke. His subsequent gigantic plans and operations against Greece, however important, claim no notice in this place. As the resources of the empire were on this occasion taxed to the uttermost, there is no reason to suppose that the Jews were able to avoid contributing towards this vast undertaking, either by their property or personal service, or by both. At the commencement of his reign the Samaritans made some attempt to prejudice him against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. But the king confirmed in every particular the grants made by his father. Xerxes is the Ahasuerus of Ezra iv. 6*.

He was succeeded in 464 B.C. by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, whose protracted reign was replete with incidents most important and interesting to the Jews. At the beginning of it they began regularly to rebuild Jerusalem, and to surround it by a wall. But they were stopped in their work by an order from the king, in consequence of a letter of complaint from the principal Samaritan officers, who described Jerusalem, truly enough, as "a rebellious and bad city;" and warned him that if the city were rebuilt and fortified, the inhabitants were sure to prove seditious as in former times, and would be likely to raise up troubles, and endanger the Persian dominion in that quarter. They appealed to the archives of the empire to prove that the town had been demolished and dismantled on account of its rebellion and seditions. The records were accordingly consulted, and the fact being found as thus stated, the king delayed not to send a letter authorising the Samaritan chiefs to stop the work until further orders. This they forthwith did, and with no gentle hand†. This opposition of the Samaritans was remarkably well-timed, and hence, in all probability, its success. Immediately on the death of Xerxes, Egypt had again revolted from the Persian yoke‡; the Samaritans therefore could not have chosen a fitter opportunity to carry their point, or a stronger argument to work upon the king's fears, than the danger that might result from allowing the Jews to fortify their city: for, strengthened and increased as they were in the seventy-two years since their return, it might be apprehended that, as in former times, they would not only themselves follow the example of Egypt by refusing to pay tribute, but that they might offer serious obstruction to the Persian army to be employed in the reduction of Egypt, in going or returning through Palestine.

After he had subdued all his domestic foes and competitors for the crown, Artaxerxes, in the third year of his reign, celebrated at Susa the general and protracted rejoicing which usually attended the settlement of a new king on the throne. At a public banquet, the king, in his cups probably, had the folly to send for the queen, Vashti, that the banqueters might be witnesses of her extreme beauty. An order so repugnant to the customs of women, the queen was under the necessity of disobeying, and disobedience, whatever were the cause, could not be allowed to pass unpunished. All the sages of Persia held that, to prevent the evil effects of this example, it was necessary that the queen should be deposed, and that the act of deposition should be accompanied by a decree *that every man should bear rule in his own house!* So Vashti was deposed; and, ultimately, a beautiful Jewish damsel, named Esther, was promoted to her place, in the fourth year of Artaxerxes.

The king had now leisure to turn his attention to Egypt, and in the course of the expedition to bring that country back to its subjection, which was happily concluded in the sixth year of his reign, he had probably sufficient opportunity to become acquainted with the present character and position of the Jews, and with the claims to his favour which they derived from the edicts of Cyrus and Darius. At all events, in the seventh year of his reign, he indicated his knowledge

* See also Joseph. 'Antiq.,' xi. 4. 8; xi. 5. 1.

† Ezra iv. 6—23. The whole passage is referred to this reign in the text (after Howe and Hales), under the impression that where it stands in the original narrative, it is an historical anticipation, and not in its proper chronological place.

‡ Diod. lib. iii.

of those edicts and his willingness to enforce them, by authorising "Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of Heaven" to proceed to Jerusalem "to beautify the house of Jehovah," and to establish the ecclesiastical and civil institutions with greater firmness and order than they had yet acquired. His powers were very large. He was commissioned to appoint judges, superior and inferior, to rectify abuses, to enforce the observance of the law, to punish the refractory with fines, imprisonment, banishment, or even with death, according to the degree of their offences. He was also permitted to make a collection for the service of the temple among those Hebrews who chose to remain in the land of their exile; and the king and his council not only largely contributed towards the same object, but the ministers of the royal revenues west of the Euphrates were charged to furnish Ezra with whatever (within certain limits) of silver, corn, wine, oil, and salt (without limit) which he might require for the service of the temple. Such persons of the Hebrew race as thought proper to return with Ezra to their own land, were permitted and invited to do so. From the whole tenour of this commission it is evident that the God of the Hebrews was still held in high respect at the Persian court; and, by a new concession, all His ministers, even to the lowest *nethinim*, were exempted from tribute, and thus put on an equality with the Persians and the Medes. For these favours some writers would assign "the solicitations of Esther" as the motive. But it is not clear that the king knew she was a Jewess. It was certainly perfectly competent for Esther to make the king better acquainted with the claims of the God she served and of the people to whom she belonged; nor should she be blamed for employing, or the king for receiving, such influence. But there were other and adequate means through which "the great king" might acquire this knowledge, at which he certainly arrived. To the series of splendid acknowledgments extracted from these illustrious monarchs through the captivity and vassalage of the Jews, let us add that of Artaxerxes, whose commission to Ezra orders:—"Whatsoever is commanded by THE GOD OF HEAVEN, let it be diligently done for the house of THE GOD OF HEAVEN; *for why should there be wrath* [from Him] against the realm of the king and his sons."

It is worthy of remark, however, that the decree of Artaxerxes was limited to the same object—the temple—as the edicts of former kings; and that no mention is made of *the walls*, from which it appears that the king was not yet prepared to concede that Jerusalem should be fortified.

The rendezvous of the party gathering for this second caravan was by the river Ahava, where the number assembled was found to consist of sixty "houses," containing one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four [adult?] males, so that, with women and children, there were probably not less than six thousand persons. When Ezra surveyed this party it was with much chagrin that he found not one of the tribe of Levi among them, notwithstanding the exemption from tribute; and it was not without difficulty that two families of priests were induced to join the emigrants.

Considering the treasure with which they were charged, and the number of helpless women and children of the party, there was much ground to apprehend danger from the Arabs infesting the desert over which the caravan must pass, and who then, as now, were wont to assault, or at least to levy large contributions on caravans too weak or too timid to resist them. Ezra therefore appointed a special season for fasting and prayer beside the river, that they might, as it were, throw themselves upon the special protection and guidance of Jehovah; for, as Ezra ingenuously confesses, "I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, 'The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him, but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.'"

Their confidence was not in vain, for they all arrived safely at Jerusalem after a journey of four months. They set out on the

first month of the seventh year of the king's reign, and reached their destination on the first day of the fifth month, 457 B.C.

Of all the improvements and regulations which Ezra introduced into Judea, the book which bears his name only records his exertions in removing the heathen women with whom matrimonial connections had very generally been formed by the Jews,—to such an extent indeed that even the sons of the high-priest Jeshua, and many of the other priests, had fallen into this grievous error. To annul these marriages, was a measure, however harsh to the natural affections, indispensably necessary as a security against a relapse into idolatry.

While Ezra was thus, and by other means, labouring to raise the character and improve the condition of the Hebrews in Judea, all the Jews in the Persian dominions were suddenly threatened with entire extermination. Haman, an Amalekite, and as such an inveterate foe of the Hebrew nation, occupied the chief place in the confidence and service of the Persian king. His paltry pride being irritated by the apparent disrespect of a Jewish officer named Mordecai (the uncle of queen Esther, but not known as such), he laid a plot for the massacre of the whole nation and the spoliation of their goods. The book of Esther, to which we must refer the reader, relates at large the particulars of the plot, and shows how the machinations of the Amalekite were defeated by the address and piety of queen Esther, and turned upon the unprincipled contriver himself, who was destroyed with all his family, and Mordecai (by virtue of an old and neglected service) promoted to his place.

In the narrative of this transaction the attention is arrested by the further illustration, offered in the case of Haman and afterwards of Mordecai, of the distinction and wealth which foreigners and captives—or, at least, persons of foreign and captive origin—were enabled to attain. The *rank* is obvious; and as to the *wealth* they were allowed to acquire, no more striking illustration can be afforded than by the fact that Haman, to gratify his barbarous whim, was in a condition to offer the king a gratuity of ten thousand talents of silver, to defray the probable deficiency of the royal revenue by the proscription of the Jews throughout the empire. This the king declined accepting. The amount, computed by the Babylonish talent, would be upwards of two millions sterling; and this, it appears, was considerably short of the full amount of the Jewish tribute.

On this occasion we also have another example of the mischievous consequences which might result from the king being unmindful of the heavy responsibility of caution, which was designed to be imposed by the well-meant law which precluded his decrees from being changed or repealed. For when Artaxerxes became convinced of the grievous wrong into which he had been led in decreeing the massacre of the Jews, it was beyond his power to recall the order he had issued. All he could do was to dispatch swift couriers with a counter decree, empowering the Jews to stand upon their defence when assaulted, with the aid of whatever moral advantage they might derive from this indication of the present intentions of the king. On the appointed day, which had been destined to sweep the race of Israel from the face of the earth, the Jews were by no means wanting to themselves. They repelled their assailants by force of arms, and that with such effect, that in Susa itself eight hundred men fell by their hands, and in the different provinces seventy-five thousand. The slaughter among the Jews themselves is not stated, but must have been considerable.

This great deliverance has ever since been commemorated by the annual Feast of *Purim*, or of Lots,—so called from the lots which were superstitiously cast by Haman to find a propitious day for the massacre.

It was not until the twentieth year of his reign that Artaxerxes granted the long-delayed permission to build the walls of Jerusalem. It was then obtained at the instance of a Jew named Nehemiah, who held at the Persian court the high and confidential office of cup-bearer, or butler. He had become acquainted with the mortifications and insults to which the inhabitants of

Jerusalem were exposed through the defenceless condition of their city; and the depression of his spirits, in consequence, was too strongly marked on his countenance to pass unnoticed by the king, who demanded the cause of his sadness. As it was no ordinary misdemeanour to exhibit sadness in the presence of "the king of kings," Nehemiah was much alarmed, but answered, "Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" The king encouraged him to declare his wishes freely, and the result was that Artaxerxes consented to dispense with his services at court for a few years, and gave him the appointment of *tirshata*, or civil governor, of Judea, in succession to Zerubbabel, whose death about this time might furnish an additional reason for the appointment *. This would not interfere with the commission of Ezra, which was chiefly of an ecclesiastical nature, and who, by the discharge of his proper function of teaching the law to the people, would give the new governor important co-operation.

Nehemiah was commissioned to build walls and gates to the town, to erect a palace for himself and future governors, and afterwards to rebuild the city. All this he accomplished with singular zeal, ability, and disinterestedness, in the course of his administration of twelve years, to which his leave of absence from the Persian court extended. He had to encounter much opposition and many threats from the chiefs of the surrounding nations,—Sanballat the Samaritan, Tobiah the Ammonite, the Arabians, and the remnant of the Philistines. But Nehemiah piously encouraged the people to rely on JEHOVAH, and "to fight for their brethren, their sons, and their daughters, their wives, and their houses." And he divided them into two parts, one to fight and the other to labour and build; and even the builder "with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." Thus, by the most noble exertions, the whole wall, which was distributed in lots among the priests and chiefs of the people, was finished, with all the towers and gates, in the short space of fifty-two days.

On the commission of Nehemiah, Hales, following the acute observations of Howes†, remarks:—

"This change in the conduct of Artaxerxes, respecting the Jews, may be accounted for upon sound political principles, and not merely from regard to the solicitations of his cup-bearer or the influence of his queen.

"Four years before, in the sixteenth year of his reign, Artaxerxes, who, after the reduction of Egypt, had prosecuted the war against their auxiliaries the Athenians, suffered a signal defeat of his forces by sea and land, from Cimon, the Athenian general, which compelled him to make an inglorious peace with them, upon the humiliating conditions, 1. That the Greek cities throughout Asia should be free and enjoy their own laws; 2. That no Persian governor should come within three days' journey of any part of the sea with an army; and 3. That no Persian ships of war should sail between the northern extremity of Asia Minor and the boundary of Palestine, according to Diodorus Siculus (lib. xii). Thus excluded from the whole line of sea-coast, and precluded from keeping garrisons in any of the maritime towns, it became not only a matter of prudence but of necessity to conciliate the Jews, to attach them to the Persian interest, and detach them from the Grecians by further privileges; that the Persians might have the benefit of a friendly fortified town like Jerusalem, within three days' journey of the sea, and a most important pass to keep up the communication between Persia and Egypt; and, to confirm this conjecture, we may remark that in all the ensuing Egyptian wars, the Jews remained faithful to the Persians; and even after the Macedonian invasion:—and surely some such powerful motive must have been opposed in the king's mind to the jealousy and displeasure this measure must unavoidably excite in the neighbouring provinces hostile to the Jews, whose remonstrances had so much weight with him formerly. It was necessary, therefore, to

* Neh. xii. 47.

† In his 'Critical Observations on Books,' ii. 82.

SAMARIA.

EASTERN MODE OF WORSHIP

entrust the important mission to an officer high in former trust and confidence such as Nehemiah, whose services at court Artaxerxes reluctantly dispensed with, as appears from his appointing a set time for Nehemiah's return, and afterwards, from his return again to Persia in the thirty-second year of his reign."

While the city remained unwalled the mass of the people had chosen rather to dwell in the country than in a place so conspicuous and yet so insecure. The walls were built on the old foundations; and Nehemiah found that although as enclosed within the walls "the city was large and great," yet, "the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded." He therefore caused the people to be registered, and required that one family in ten (to be chosen by lot) should come to reside in Jerusalem. Those who, without waiting the decision of the lot, voluntarily offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem, were received with peculiar favour. The city was thus replenished with inhabitants, and the walls with defenders. The walls were dedicated with great solemnity and joy. And while the governor was thus heedful of the stone-and-mortar framework of the social system which he desired to establish, he was by no means negligent of the inhabiting and animating spirit. He applied himself diligently (assisted by Ezra) to the organization of the temple-service, and of the civil government; while various abuses, which the unsettled condition of affairs had engendered, were corrected by him with a firm and unsparing hand. And to strengthen his authority and influence, and that he and his government might not be burdensome to the people, this fine-spirited man declined to receive the usual dues of a governor; but while he travelled with a great retinue, maintained a large number of servants, and kept open table at Jerusalem, the heavy charges were entirely borne from his own private fortune, which must have been very considerable. That he, a foreigner and a captive, was enabled to accumulate such a fortune, affords another illustration of the liberality of the Persian government; which also was, unquestionably, as far as the Hebrews at least were concerned, the best and most generous of the foreign governments to which they were at any time subjected.

It was during the government of Nehemiah that Ezra, his ecclesiastical coadjutor, completed his collection and revisal of the sacred books. Traces of his careful hand may still be detected throughout the historical books of Scripture; and the settlement of the Old Testament canon in nearly its present shape may be ascribed to him. Among his labours was the exchange of the old Hebrew character of writing—with which the people had now become unacquainted—for the more shapely and generally known Chaldean character, with which alone the people were now familiar. The difference thus created is not so great as that which would take place were the Germans to exchange their peculiar (and not very elegant) character of print for that (the Roman) which prevails among nearly all other European nations. The Samaritans did not adopt or need this change in their copies of the Pentateuch; they retained the original character, which, therefore, has since been known as the Samaritan character.

It was not alone the old Hebrew *character* of writing, but the language itself, which had become unintelligible to the mass of the people, who had been born beyond the Euphrates, and had imbibed the East-Aramæan or Chaldee dialect as a mother tongue. The old Hebrew was still well known to, and spoken by, educated persons in their intercourse with each other; but the Chaldee was used in all the common intercourse of life, since that only was understood by all. It was not, however, until the time of the Maccabees, that the old Hebrew was completely displaced by the Chaldee. This last language is but a dialect of the Hebrew, which fact accounts for the ease with which the Jews fell into the use of it during the Captivity. It however assigned to words essentially the same such additional or new meanings, and such differing terminations and pronunciation, that the old Hebrew could be but imperfectly intelligible to those who understood only the Chaldee.

Accordingly, when Ezra had finished his revision of the sacred books, and the people thronged to Jerusalem to hear the authentic law from his lips, it was necessary that some of the Levites should interpret to the multitude what this excellent person read in Hebrew from the book. This was a very solemn and interesting occasion. The people assembled in the open street; and Ezra, raised above the people on a kind of pulpit made for the occasion, read from the book of the Law to an immense audience, who listened with most wrapt attention to the interpretations which the surrounding Levites gave. It is manifest that the copies of the Law had been scarce, and that it had not been publicly read to the people, for it is manifest that they heard much on this occasion with which they were not previously acquainted; and the consciousness of the extent to which the injunctions which they heard had been neglected by them, filled them with grief, and occasioned much and loud lamentation, which the Levites allayed with difficulty. Among other things, they heard of the Feast of Tabernacles, and found that the time of its celebration was close at hand. They therefore proceeded forthwith to manifest their obedience to this law, and they celebrated the feast in a manner so distinguished that nothing like it had been known since the time of Joshua.

Nehemiah and Ezra availed themselves of the favourable disposition which at this time existed to induce the people to enter into one of those solemn covenants which we have had frequent occasion to notice in the past history. This was, however, more specific in its obligations; for the people pledged themselves, 1, To walk in God's law as given to Moses; 2, Not to intermarry with the people of the land; 3, To observe the sabbath-day, and not to buy or to sell goods thereon; 4, To keep the sabbatical year, and to remit all debts therein; 5, To pay a tax of a third of a shekel yearly for the service of the temple; 6, And to render their first-fruits and tithes as required by the Law.

At the expiration of his twelfth year of office, when his leave of absence expired, Nehemiah returned to resume his station at the Persian court.

When he departed, no person with adequate authority appears to have been left to carry on or complete his measures. His salutary regulations, and even the solemn covenant into which the people had entered, was gradually infringed and violated. The general laxity of principle and conduct may be estimated from the proceedings of the persons who might have been expected to offer the brightest examples of knowledge and faithfulness. Thus the high-priest himself, Eliashib, gave Tobiah the Ammonite (the grand opponent of Nehemiah) for lodging, even in the temple itself, a large chamber, which had been used as a store-room for the tithes and offerings. This Tobiah, as well as his son Johanan, had married Jewish women and become allied to the high-priest. One of the grandsons of Eliashib was also son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite, another of Nehemiah's great adversaries. The temple service was neglected; the tithes, appointed for the support of the Levites and the singers, were abstracted by the high-priest and his agents, or withheld by the people; the sabbath was profaned in every possible way*; and marriages with strange women were frequent among the people. In accounting for the demoralization of this period, it may not be improper to connect it with the frequent march of Persian troops through the territory in passing to and from Egypt, which was frequently in a state of revolt. By this Judea was made to share in the evils of war, than which nothing is more relaxing of the bonds by which the order of civil society is maintained.

The tidings of this relapse occasioned much grief to Nehemiah at the Persian court, and he ultimately succeeded in obtaining permission to return to Judea. He returned in his former capacity as governor, and applied himself most vigorously to the correction of the evils which had gained

* One of the profanations consisted in the practice of the Tyrians bringing fish to the city for sale on the sabbath day. A curious fact.

ground during his absence*. His exertions appear to have been continued for four years, or until the third year of Darius Nothus, whom Nehemiah designates as Darius the Persian. The end, therefore, of this eminent person's second reform, which may be taken as the final act in the restoration and settlement of the Jews in their own land, may be ascribed to the year 420 B.C. With this year, therefore, the canon of the Old Testament concludes; for Malachi, the last of the prophets, is alleged by tradition, supported by every probability of internal evidence, to have prophesied during this later administration of Nehemiah. Malachi is supposed by many to be the same as Ezra.

One of the measures of Nehemiah was to expel the grandson of the high-priest, who had wedded the daughter of Sanballat, from whom he declined to separate. This act was attended with important consequences. Josephus informs us that this person's name was Manasseh; and that, on being expelled from Jerusalem, he went to his father-in-law Sanballat, who, by his interest with the Persian king, obtained permission to build a temple upon Mount Gerizim like that at Jerusalem, and in which JEHOVAH was to be worshipped with similar services. Of this establishment he made Manasseh the high-priest. This, in future, attracted numbers of Jews who had married strange wives from whom they could not bring themselves to part, or who had rendered themselves amenable to punishment by other transgressions of the Law. And this, while it tended in a very serious degree to aggravate the enmity between the two nations, served ere long to correct the remaining idolatrous practices, and tendencies to idolatry among the Samaritans. Receiving the account of these matters through Josephus, and other prejudiced writers, it behoves us to be cautious of receiving all the impressions they intend to convey. The temple of Gerizim was undoubtedly a schismatical establishment. But seeing that, on the one hand, the Samaritans were anxious to worship Jehovah according to the regulations of Moses, while, on the other, the Jews, whether right or wrong, pertinaciously refused to receive their adhesion to the temple of Jerusalem, it is difficult to see what other course was left them than to build a temple for themselves. Besides, the obligation of adhesion to one temple was imposed only on the seed of Abraham; and the Law made no provision for the case of a people who desired to worship Jehovah, but were repelled by the Jews. And this very fact may suggest that this repulsion was in itself not legal, whatever good effects may ultimately have resulted from it.

* The time is uncertain and conjectures vary. Hales makes it 424 B.C., six years after his return to Persia.

CHAPTER III.

FROM 420 B.C. TO 163 B.C.

AFTER Nehemiah, no more separate governors of Judea were sent from Persia. The territory was annexed to the province of Cœle-Syria, and the administration of Jewish affairs was left to the high-priests, subject to the control of the provincial governors. This raised the high-priesthood to a degree of temporal dignity and power, which very soon made it such an object of worldly ambition, as to occasion many violent and disgraceful contests among persons who had the least possible regard for the religious character and obligations of the sacerdotal office.

The history of this period is obscure and intricate. Facts are few, and some of those which we possess are hard to reconcile. But there is enough to acquaint us with the unholy violence and unprincipled conduct of the competitors for the priesthood, and the

sufferings arising from this, as well as from the arbitrary proceedings of those who succeeded in obtaining that high office.

Jeshua, the high-priest who returned with Zerubbabel, was succeeded by his son Joachim, and he by his son Eliashib, who obtains unfavourable notice in the history of Nehemiah's second administration. He was then old, and died in 413 B.C. He was succeeded by his son Joiada, or Judas, who held the office for forty years, 413—373 B.C.

Artaxerxes, who died in 423 B.C., left one son by his queen, and seventeen sons by his concubines. The first was named Xerxes, and, among the latter, history only knows Sogdianus, Ochus, and Arsites. Xerxes, the only legitimate son, succeeded; but, after forty-five days, he was slain by Sogdianus, who mounted the throne. On this, Ochus, who was governor of Hyrcania, marched thence with a powerful army to avenge the deed. Sogdianus submitted, and was put to death*. Ochus, in ascending the vacant throne, took the name of Darius, and was surnamed Nothus, or "bastard," to distinguish him from others of the name.

Of the events of this troubled reign, it is perhaps only necessary to notice that the Egyptians again shook off the Persian yoke, and made Amyrtæus of Sais their king, 413 B.C. With the aid of the Arabians, they drove the Persians out of Egypt, pursued them as far as Phœnicia, and maintained their independence sixty-four years. Ochus sent an army against them without success. The Persian forces marched to Egypt along the coast, through Judea. This event could not fail to act to the serious detriment and disquiet of the Jews; but we possess no precise information on the subject. The Persian army while on its march might have laid waste Idumea, because the Idumeans had perhaps taken part with those Arabs, who, in conjunction with the Egyptians, had pursued the Persians into Phœnicia, while the Jews continued faithful to the Persian government, with which they certainly had no reason to be dissatisfied. The prophet Malachi appears to allude to these circumstances†.

Darius Nothus died in 404 B.C., and was succeeded by his eldest son Arsaces, who, on his accession, took the name of Artaxerxes, and was surnamed Memnon, on account of his astonishing "memory." The long reign of this monarch was full of striking and important events; but our notice must be confined to the circumstances connected with Egypt and Phœnicia, with which the Jews could not but be in some way involved.

Artaxerxes determined to make a vigorous effort to restore the Persian power in Egypt; and to this end made most extensive preparation, continued for three years. At last, in 473 B.C., he had equipped a most formidable expedition by land and sea, which, he confidently expected, would speedily reduce the strongholds, and firmly establish his authority throughout the country. But the jealousy between the commanders of the land and sea-forces, prevented that union of purpose and action which was essential to success. Pelusium was found to be impregnable, and all the fortified towns were placed in a state of defence. The Persian general, Pharnabazus, therefore, despaired of making any impression upon them, and advanced into the interior; but being opposed by the Egyptian king (Nectanebo) with a considerable force, and, in consequence of the want of boats, being constantly impeded in his movements by the various channels of the rising Nile, he was obliged to retreat and relinquish the hope of subjecting Egypt to the Persian yoke.

The Egyptian king, by whom the Persians were thus repelled, was succeeded in 369 B.C. by Teos or Tachos, who formed large designs, and made extensive preparations for acting offensively against the Persian power. He made an alliance with the Lacedæmonians, and received from them 10,000 auxiliaries under the command of Agesilaus their king. Both the person and counsels of this consummate general were treated with considerable disrespect; and the king persisted in leading his army in person into Phœnicia against the Persians. But his absence was immediately

* He was smothered in ashes. Ochus had sworn not to kill him by sword, poison, or hunger; and therefore invented this novel kind of death to observe the letter while he infringed the spirit of his oath.

† Mal. i. 2—5.

followed by a powerful conspiracy in favour of his relative Nectanebo, for whom the army also declared, so that the infatuated Tacho had no resource but to flee from his own people and throw himself under the protection of the great and generous king of Persia, whose dominions he had invaded.

The Idumeans again suffered much from being mixed up in the contest between the Persians and Egyptians. Nor can it be supposed that the Jews escaped without much moral, if not physical, injury. It will be considered that they were exposed to the burdens of a military rendezvous from 377 to 374 B.C.; for at that time there were assembled in their vicinity 200,000 barbarian soldiers, besides 20,000 Greeks; and 300 ships of war, 200 galleys of thirty rowers, and a great number of store ships were collected at Acco (Acre). The invading army of Persia, both in going and returning, took its route along their coasts, as did afterwards the Egyptian army in its invasion of Phœnicia. These circumstances could not but be attended with very injurious effects; but upon the whole the Jews may be considered to have enjoyed peace and comfort during most of the reign of Artaxerxes Memnon, who was a prince of mild and humane character, and governed with much moderation and prudence, and with considerable political wisdom. However, in all the provinces, much depended on the character of the governor or satrap, whose powers, within his province, were almost regal. Artaxerxes died in 358 B.C., after a long reign of forty-six years. The pen of Xenophon has immortalized the revolt of his younger brother, Cyrus, by which the early part of his reign was much troubled. The retreat of the 10,000 Greeks—who had fought for Cyrus and survived his overthrow and death—under the conduct of the historian himself, has been more admired and celebrated than most ancient or modern victories.

It was between the periods of disturbance which have been indicated, namely, in 373 B.C., that the high-priest Joiada died, and was succeeded by his son Jonathan, or Jochanan (John). About the time of the Egyptian invasion, this person occasioned much trouble to his nation. His brother Jesus had become so great a favourite with the Persian governor Bagoses, that he nominated him to the priesthood. When Jesus came to Jerusalem in that capacity, he was slain by Jonathan in the very temple. Bagoses no sooner heard of this outrage than he hastened to Jerusalem; and when an attempt was made to exclude him from the temple as a Gentile, and consequently unclean, he replied with vehemence, "What! am not I as clean as the dead carcase that lies in your temple?" The punishment which Bagoses imposed for the murder of Jesus was a heavy tax upon the lambs offered in sacrifice. This onerous impost was not remitted until the succeeding reign; and it must have been the more sensibly felt, as the priests had for many years been accustomed to receive large contributions from the Persian kings towards defraying the expense of the sacrifices.

Artaxerxes Memnon was succeeded in the throne of Persia by his son Ochus. In his reign, among many other disturbances which we need not mention, the Sidonians, Phœnicians, and Cyprians revolted, and made common cause with the Egyptians, who still maintained their independence. After repeated failures of his generals to reduce them, Ochus himself took the command of the expedition against them. He besieged Sidon, which was betrayed to him by the king Tennes; on which the Sidonians in despair set fire to the city, and burned themselves with all their treasures. Terrified by this catastrophe of Sidon, the other Phœnicians submitted on the best terms they could obtain; and among them we may include the Jews, who seem to have joined the common cause. Being anxious to invade Egypt, Ochus was not unreasonable in his demands. After having also received the submission of Cyprus, the king marched into Egypt 350 B.C., and completely reduced it, chiefly by the assistance of Mentor, the Rhodian, and 10,000 mercenary Greeks whom he had drawn into his service. The Egyptians were treated with a severity more congenial to the savage disposition of Ochus than was the moderation to which

policy had constrained him in Phœnicia:—he dismantled the towns; he plundered the temples of their treasures and public records; and the ox-god Apis he sacrificed *to an ass*—a severe practical satire upon the animal worship of Egypt, and not less significant as an act of revenge upon the Egyptians for their having nicknamed himself *The Ass*, on account of his apparent inactivity and sluggishness. Ochus returned in triumph to Babylon, laden with spoil of gold and silver, and other precious things from the kingdoms and provinces he had conquered. From this decisive war the humiliation of Egypt may be dated. Nectanebo II., *the last of her native kings*, now fled with all the treasures he could collect into Ethiopia. Thenceforth, even to this day, it has been the destiny of Egypt only to change *masters*, as Ezekiel the prophet had foretold*.

That the Jews were involved in the revolt of the Phœnicians has been already intimated. This appears from the fact that Ochus went from Phœnicia to Jericho, subdued that city, took some of the inhabitants with him into Egypt, and sent others into Hyrcania to people that province. But that the disaffection of the Jews was not general, or that, at least, it was not shared by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, may be inferred from the fact that this city was not disturbed. Indeed the Jews owed some gratitude to Ochus for remitting at his accession the heavy tax† which Bagoses had in the preceding reign imposed.

It was in the eighteenth year of Ochus (341 B.C.) that the high-priest Jonathan, whose murder of his brother Jesus had given occasion for the imposition of this tax, died, and was succeeded by Jaddua or Jaddus.

Ochus, after having re-established his dominion over all the provinces which had newly or in former times revolted, abandoned himself to luxurious repose, leaving the government in the hands of Bagoas, an Egyptian eunuch, and of his general Memnon, from both of whom he had received important services during the Egyptian war. But Bagoas could not forgive the ruin of his country, although that had been the basis of his own fortunes. He poisoned Ochus and destroyed all his sons, except Arses, the youngest. This horrid act was followed by his sending back to Egypt such of the plundered archives as he could collect. Arses, whom he had spared, he placed on the throne, expecting to reign in his name. But finding that the young king contemplated the punishment of the murderer of his father and his brothers, Bagoas anticipated his intention, and in the third year of his reign destroyed him and all the remaining members of his family. The eunuch, whose soul was now hardened to iron by the concurrent and repeated action of grief and crime, tendered the sceptre to Codomanus, the governor of Armenia, a descendant of Darius Nothus‡, and who on his accession assumed the name of Darius, and is known in history as Darius Codomanus, 335 B.C. Bagoas soon repented of his choice, and plotted the death of this king also; but Darius having discovered his design, returned to his own lips the poisoned chalice which he had prepared for the king.

Few kings at their accession ever enjoyed greater advantages than Darius. He had no competitors or opponents; his treasures, increased under Ochus by the plunder of many lands, seemed exhaustless; his dominion appeared well established over all the nations which abode from the Indus to the isles of Greece, and from the cataracts of the Nile to the Caucasian mountains; and with all this, the personal bravery of Darius and his acknowledged merits made him universally respected and admired throughout his empire. But bright as appeared his star, another had risen before which his own grew pale and became extinct.

* Ezek. xxix. 13—16.

† Jahn estimates that it must have produced 50,000*l.*, perhaps rathers too high an estimate.

‡ His grandfather was the brother of Darius Nothus, and his father was the only one of the family who escaped the massacre with which Ochus commenced his reign. He afterwards married and had a son, who was this Codomanus. The young man lived in obscurity during most of the reign of Ochus, supporting himself as an *astanda*, or courier, by carrying the royal dispatches. He at last had an opportunity of distinguishing his valour by slaying a Cadusian champion, who, like another Goliath, defied the whole Persian army. For this gallant exploit he was rewarded by Ochus with the important government of Armenia.

Alexander, the son of Philip, king of Macedon, ascended the throne when he was only twenty years of age, in 335 B.C., being the very same year that Darius Codomanus became king of Persia. It is not necessary in a work of this nature to record the exploits of this celebrated hero, unless so far as necessary to carry on the history of Palestine and the Jews.

In the spring of 334 B.C., Alexander arrived at Sestos on the Hellespont, at the head of little more than 30,000 foot and 5000 horse, and had them conveyed to Asia by his fleet of 160 galleys, besides transports, without any opposition from the enemy on their landing. He had with him only seventy talents, or a month's pay for his army, and before he left home he disposed of almost all the revenues of the crown among his friends. When asked "what he left for himself?" he answered "*Hope*." Such was the spirit with which Alexander invaded Asia.

On the fifth day after the passage of the Hellespont, Alexander met the Persians at the river Granicus in the Lesser Phrygia, where the governor of the western provinces had assembled an army of 100,000 foot and 20,000 horse to oppose his passage. By defeating this great army Alexander gained possession of the Persian treasury at Sardis, the capital of the western division of the Persian Empire; several provinces of Asia Minor then voluntarily submitted to him, and in the course of the summer others were subjugated. In the campaign of the following year (333 B.C.) Alexander subdued Phrygia, Paphlagonia, Pisidia, Cappadocia, and Cilicia.

Darius meanwhile was not remiss in making preparations for a vigorous resistance to the most formidable enemy the empire had ever seen. His admiral, whom he had sent with a fleet to make a diversion by a descent upon Macedonia, died in the midst of the enterprise; and in an age where so much depended upon individuals, his death spoiled the undertaking. Darius then assembled a vast army, which some accounts make 400,000, others 600,000 men, in Babylonia, and led them in person towards Cilicia to meet Alexander. That hero, on hearing of this movement, hastened forward to seize the passes of Cilicia. In this he succeeded, and stationed himself at Issus, where not more than 30,000 men could march up to the attack. In this position his flanks were protected, and he could bring his whole army into action, while the Persians could only bring a number of men equal to his own into conflict. Darius saw too late how much wiser it had been for him to await the Greeks in the plains of Damascus. He lost the battle. The vast number of his soldiers was worse than useless; for the retreat was thus so obstructed, that more were crushed to death in the eagerness of flight than had been slain by the weapons of the Greeks. Darius himself escaped with difficulty, leaving his whole camp, with his own rich baggage, and his mother, wife, and sons, in the hands of the victor. These last were treated with tenderness and respect by the generous conqueror. To him this victory opened Syria, Phœnicia, and Egypt. Immediately after the battle he sent to Damascus, and took all the heavy baggage, equipage, and treasures of the Persian army, with their wives and children, which had been left behind in the disastrous expedition to the Syrian straits.

For the present Alexander did not follow Darius, who withdrew beyond the Euphrates; but according to his original plan of reducing first all the maritime provinces of the empire, he marched in the spring of 332 B.C. into Phœnicia. All the states of that country tendered their submission to him, except Tyre, which, however, was willing to render him barren testimonials of respect, had he been content with these. The siege of this place was one of the most splendid of Alexander's operations, and is even at this day regarded with admiration by military men. Tyre, which since the destruction of the ancient city by Nebuchadnezzar had been rebuilt upon an island about 400 fathoms from the shore, relied upon the aid of Carthage (which was promised by the Carthaginian ambassadors there present in the city) and still more upon its situation, Alexander being destitute of shipping*, and on its

* Alexander, after the battle of the Granicus, had discharged and dismissed his fleet, which was too small to

walls, which were high and strong, and which were now additionally strengthened. The city was plentifully supplied with provisions, and fresh supplies could be brought by sea without any difficulty. But Alexander, with the rubbish of the ancient city, constructed a causeway from the shore to the island, and in seven months took the place by storm, although the Tyrians defended themselves bravely. Many of them fled to Carthage by sea, but of those who remained, 8000 were put to the sword, 30,000 were sold into slavery, and 2000 were crucified, while the city was plundered and laid in ashes. These barbarities were committed under the policy of deterring other places from offering resistance to the conqueror. Thus the prophecy of Zechariah respecting new Tyre was literally accomplished as the previous prophecy of Ezekiel against the old city had been fulfilled in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander had, however, enlarged views of commercial policy, which induced him to repeople Tyre from the neighbouring countries; and—improved in its harbours and basins by the very isthmus which he had made, and by which, consolidated by time, the island has ever since been connected with the shore—this maritime city was not long in recovering much of its former greatness.

There is every reason to conclude that Alexander, when he invaded Syria, summoned all the cities to surrender, to pay to him their customary tribute, and to furnish his army with provisions. Josephus affirms that during the siege of Tyre, a written order of this description came to Jerusalem, addressed to Jaddua, the high-priest, as the chief magistrate of the nation. Jaddua replied that he had sworn fealty to Darius, and could not violate his oath as long as that monarch was living. Alexander, naturally of a furious and impetuous temper, was highly irritated by this reply, and threatened that as soon as he had completed the conquest of Tyre, he would, by the punishment of the Jewish high-priest, teach all others to whom they were to keep their oaths.

Accordingly, on his progress to Egypt, after the destruction of Tyre (332 B.C.) he turned aside from Gaza, which he reduced, to chastise Jerusalem. But he was met at Sapha—an eminence near Jerusalem, which commanded a view of the city and temple—by a solemn procession, consisting of the high-priest arrayed in his pontifical robes, attended by the priests in their proper habits, and by a number of the citizens in white raiment. This course Jaddua had been commanded to take, in a vision, the preceding night. When Alexander beheld the high-priest, he instantly advanced to meet him, adored the sacred NAME inscribed on his mitre, and saluted him first. This singular conduct the hero accounted for by observing to those around him,—"I adore not the high-priest, but the God with whose priesthood he is honoured. When I was at Dios in Macedonia, and considering in myself how to subdue Asia, I saw in a dream such a person, in his present dress, who encouraged me not to delay, but to pass over with confidence, for that himself would lead my army and give me the Persian Empire. Since therefore I have seen no other person in such a dress as I now see, and recollect the vision and the exhortation in my dream, I think that having undertaken this expedition *by a Divine mission*, I shall conquer Darius, overthrow the Persian Empire, and succeed in all my designs." Having thus spoken (to Parmenio) he gave his right hand to the high-priest, and going into the temple, he offered sacrifice according to the high-priest's directions, and treated the pontiff and the priests with distinguished honours. The book of Daniel was then shown to him, in which it was foretold that one of the Greeks should overthrow the Persian Empire, pleased at which, and believing himself to be the person intended, he dismissed the multitude. The day after, he caused the people to be assembled, and desired them to ask what favours they desired; on which, at the suggestion of the high-priest, they asked and obtained the free enjoyment of their

cope with that of the Persians (collected from Egypt and Phœnicia), and yet too large for his slender treasury to maintain. He declared that he would render himself master of the sea by conquering on land—that is, by getting the ports and harbours of the enemy into his possession. It was in consequence of this large idea that he persevered in reducing Phœnicia and Egypt before he advanced into the interior.

national laws, and an exemption from tribute every seventh year. He also, by a bold anticipation of his fortunes, promised that the Jews in Babylon and Media should enjoy their own laws; and he offered to take with him in his expedition any of the people who chose to share his prospects*.

This story has been much questioned by many writers, as they were at perfect liberty to do. Nevertheless, as these questioners are of the same class as those who doubt on the unusual or supernatural details of the sacred history itself, it is impossible not to see that the *animus* of objection is essentially the same. We are therefore disposed to declare our belief in this statement: 1, Because Alexander had been a clear and conspicuous object of prophecy; and that an operation upon his mind by dream or vision, was as natural and necessary as in the cases of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar: 2, Because it was as necessary that the God of the Hebrews should be made known to him as the bestower of empires, as to the other great conquerors—all of whom had been brought to avow it: 3, Because an operation upon the mind of Alexander was a natural and necessary sequel to the operations upon the minds of those former conquerors: 4, Because the impression described as being made by this dream upon Alexander, and the conduct which resulted from it, is perfectly in unison with his character and conduct as described by other historians: 5, Because the Jews actually did enjoy the privileges which are described as the result of this transaction, and which it would not otherwise be easy to account for, or to refer to any other origin.

The Samaritans had early submitted to Alexander, and sent him auxiliaries at the siege of Tyre; and now seeing the favour with which the Jews had been treated, they were not at all backward to claim the same privileges which had been conceded to them; for, as Josephus (with some asperity) remarks, the Samaritans were always ready to profess themselves to be Jews, when the sons of Abraham were in prosperous circumstances and equally ready to disavow the connection when the Jews were in distress or difficulty. They also met Alexander in solemn procession, and as they were graciously received, they also requested exemption from tribute on the sabbatical year, since they, as well as the Jews, then left their lands uncultivated. But as, when pressed, they could not give a direct and satisfactory answer to the question whether they were Jews, Alexander told them he would take time to consider the matter, and let them know his decision when he returned from Egypt. It was not his policy to encourage such applications, as others, under the same or other pretences, might make similar claims of exemption, to the great injury of the public revenues. The eight thousand Samaritans who had assisted him at the siege of Tyre he took with him to Egypt, and assigned them lands in the Thebaïd.

When Alexander reached Egypt, he met with no opposition. The Persian garrisons were too weak to resist him, and the natives everywhere hailed him as their deliverer from the Persian bondage. In fact the Egyptians abhorred the Persians, and liked the Greeks as much as any foreigners could be liked by them. And the reason is very obvious. The Persians hated and despised image and animal worship as thoroughly as it was possible for the Jews to do, and the power of their arms gave them much opportunity for the exercise of the iconoclastic zeal by which they were actuated. They lost no opportunity of throwing contempt and ignominy upon the idols and idolaters of Egypt. But the pliable Greek regarded the same objects with reverence, and had no difficulty of so adopting them into his own system, or of identifying them with his own idols, as such a course enabled him to participate in the worship which the Egyptians rendered to them.

From Egypt Alexander went to visit the temple of Ammon, in an oasis of the western desert; and at this celebrated temple got himself recognised as the son of the god (commonly known as Jupiter Ammon) worshipped there*. It is better (with Plutarch)

* Joseph. 'Antiq.,' xi. 8, 4, 5.

* This god was worshipped under the form of a ram:

to attribute this to political motives, than to admit that impression of Alexander's understanding which the affair is calculated to convey. Alexander had much good sense, as yet uncorrupted by the extraordinary prosperity which had attended his undertakings; but he knew that there were millions in the world who would receive the belief of his heavenly origin as a discouragement to resistance, and as a consolation in defeat.

After his return from Libya, Alexander wintered at Memphis, and appointed separate and independent governors of the several garrisoned towns, in order to prevent the mischief so often experienced by the Persians in entrusting too much power to a single hand. He prudently separated the financial, judicial, and military functions, to prevent the oppression of the people by their union; and his enlightened and comprehensive policy chose the site of a new city, Alexandria, to be the emporium of commerce for the eastern and western worlds by its two adjacent seas, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. The great prosperity which the city ultimately reached, and a considerable share of which it has ever since retained, affords the best illustration of the large and sagacious views with which it was founded.

Early in the spring of 331 B.C., Alexander prepared to seek Darius beyond the Euphrates. The rendezvous of his army was appointed at Tyre; in advancing to which Alexander once more passed through Palestine. During his absence in Egypt, some Samaritans (perhaps enraged that they had not obtained the same privileges as the Jews) set fire to the house of Andromachus, whom Alexander had appointed their governor, and he perished in the flames. The other Samaritans delivered up the culprits to Alexander, on his return from Egypt; but they could hardly dare at this time to remind him of their previous claim (respecting the sabbatic year), which he had promised to consider, as the conqueror was so highly enraged that, not satisfied with the punishment of the actual culprits, he removed the Samaritans from their city, and transferred thither a Macedonian colony*. The Samaritans, thus excluded from Samaria, thenceforth made Shechem their metropolis. This, it will be remembered, was at the foot of Mount Gerizim, on which the Samaritan temple stood.

The operations and victories of Alexander beyond the Euphrates are not so connected with the history of Palestine as to require to be traced in this work. We therefore abstain from particular notice of the battle of Arbela, in Assyria†, which gave Alexander possession of the Persian throne; the flight of Darius into Media, with the view of raising new levies there; the prevention of this intention by the speedy pursuit of Alexander; the further flight of Darius, and his murder by the conspirators, into whose hands he had fallen, and whom Alexander ultimately overtook and punished. As little need our attention be detained by his northern and Indian expeditions, full as they are of interesting circumstances on which it might be pleasant to expatiate.

He returned to Persia in 324 B.C., with a character still great, and adequate to great occasions; but, upon the whole, very much damaged in its finer traits, by the intoxication of mind which, but too naturally, his inordinate successes produced. On his return he enquired into and punished the maladministrations of his generals and governors of provinces, during his long absence eastward. The last year of his life he spent in a circuit through the imperial cities of Persepolis, Susa, Ecbatana, and Babylon, and in forming the noblest plans for the consolidation and improvement of his mighty empire. These plans we cannot recapitulate; but they are well worth the most attentive study of those who would realize a just impression respecting one of the most remarkable men the world has produced. The grasp of his mind was perhaps as large as that of his ambition: and while we regard his plans of universal conquest, and the sacrifice of human life and happiness which his causeless wars involved, with the most intense

hence the ram's horns which appear on the head of Alexander in many figures of him.

* Curtius, iv. 21. Comp. Euseb. Chron.

† Fought Oct. 1, 331 B.C.

dislike, we have no desire to conceal our admiration of the many illustrious qualities which his mind exhibited.

Alexander arrived at Babylon in 324 B.C., intending to make that city his future residence, and the capital of his gigantic empire. Hence he was full of projects for restoring that city to its ancient beauty and magnificence. This included the rebuilding of the temple of Belus, which the Jewish prophecies had devoted to destruction, *never to be rebuilt*. Alexander, nevertheless, actually commenced this work. The soldiers were employed in turn to remove the rubbish. The Jews alone refused to render any assistance, and suffered many stripes for their refusal, and paid heavy fines, until the king, astonished at their firmness, pardoned and excused them. "They also," adds their historian, "on their return home, pulled down the temples and altars which had been erected by the colonists in their land, and paid a fine for some to the satraps, or governors, and received a pardon for others."

The death of Alexander at Babylon,—in the midst of his prosperity, his excesses, his large plans, and also during his ominous attempt to rebuild the temple of Belus, and at the early age of thirty-two years,—was calamitous to the Jewish nation. For amidst the contests that prevailed among Alexander's successors,—each striving for the mastery, and celebrating his death, as he himself foretold, with funeral games the most bloody, —"evils were multiplied in the earth,"* and the Jews, from their intermediate situation, lying between the two powerful kingdoms (as they speedily became) of Syria northward, and of Egypt southward, were alternately harassed by both. According to the imagery of Josephus, "They resembled a ship tossed by a hurricane, and buffeted on both sides by the waves, while they lay in the midst of contending seas."†

Every one is acquainted with the scramble for empire which took place among the generals and principal officers of Alexander, upon his death. It is useless to enter into the details and trace the results of this struggle in the present work. It is only necessary that we should disentangle from the complicated web which history here weaves, such threads as may be found useful in leading on the history of the Jews and Palestine.

It was determined that Aridæus, an illegitimate brother of Alexander, a man of no capacity, should be made king under the name of Philip, and that a posthumous son of Alexander's, called Alexander Ægeus, should be joined to him, Perdiccas being regent and guardian of the two kings, who were both incapable of reigning. After some deliberation Perdiccas distributed the governments among the generals and ministers. Some who had been appointed by Alexander were confirmed in their provinces. The rest are named below‡.

It was scarcely possible that the authority of two such kings, vested in a regent, should hold in check the powerful and ambitious governors of the provinces. Indeed the latter paid them the least possible regard and attention, and immediately after the assignment of the provinces, wars broke out not only between the governors themselves, but between them and the regent.

Our plan of confining our notices to the circumstances which more immediately affected Palestine, leads us first to notice the combination against the regent Perdiccas, which was formed in 322 B.C. by Antigonus, Antipater, Leonatus, and Ptolemy, on account of the design which Perdiccas betrayed of appropriating the crown of Macedonia, of which Antigonus was himself desirous. Perdiccas, who kept the young kings constantly with him, was then in Cappadocia. The next spring he, accompanied by the two

* 1 Macc. i. 19.

† 'Antiq.' xii. 3, 3. See Hales, ii. 537.

‡ Porus and Taxiles had India; Sebyrrius, Arachosia and Gedrosia; Tleopolemus, Caramania; Peucestes, Persia; Python, Media; Phrataphernes, Parthia and Hyrcania; Stanasor, Aria and Drangiana; Philip, Bactria and Sogdiana; Arcesilaus, Mesopotamia; Archon, Babylonia; Ptolemy Lagus, Egypt; Laomedon, Syria and Palestine; Philotas, Cilicia; Eumenes, Paphlagonia and Cappadocia; Antigonus, Pamphylia, Lycia, and Greater Phrygia; Cassander, Caria; Meleager, Lydia; Leonatus, Lesser Phrygia, and the country around the Hellespont; Lysimachus, Thrace; Antipater, Macedonia; Seleucus, afterwards destined to be the greatest of these names, received the important office of commander of the cavalry.

kings, marched a large army *through Syria* into Egypt, to subdue Ptolemy in the first place, while Eumenes was left in Asia Minor to prosecute the war against Antipater and his allies. The result of this expedition was, that Perdiccas was slain by his own soldiers, who went over to Ptolemy, who was a very able and popular man, and natural brother to Alexander. Eumenes was proclaimed an outlaw, and, ultimately, the regency was undertaken by Antipater, who made some changes in the governments, appointing Seleucus governor of Babylonia; Antigonus to be general of Asia, to prosecute the war against the outlawed Eumenes; and the command of the cavalry he gave to his own son Cassander, who was then with Antigonus.

The passage of a part of the royal army, through Judea, in going to and from Egypt, as just related, could not fail to involve the Jews in some of the miseries of war. But when the same royal army, under Antigonus, was otherwise employed against Eumenes, Ptolemy, who had become very powerful, embraced the opportunity to take possession of Judea, Samaria, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria, which were all easily subjugated by

[Ptolemy Lagus, or Soter.]

Nicanor his general. Laomedon, the governor, was taken prisoner, but contrived to make his escape. Thus Palestine was partly the theatre of this short war; but as Laomedon could make but a faint resistance, little injury was probably sustained by the inhabitants; and, since it was their destiny to be a subject people, the inhabitants were well rewarded for what they then suffered, by passing under the dominion of so benevolent a prince as Ptolemy Lagus. He went himself to Jerusalem, as Josephus says, for the purpose of sacrifice in the temple after the example of Alexander, and on this occasion declared himself master of the country. To secure his dominions he took a number of the people with him to Egypt. Among these were several of the Samaritans and several thousand Jews; but their condition could not be very calamitous, as many of their countrymen soon followed them of their own accord.

Ptolemy was soon made acquainted with the fidelity with which the Jews had maintained their allegiance to the Persian kings. This was a rare quality in those times: and wishing to attach such a people to himself, he restored the privileges they had enjoyed under Alexander; he employed a part of them to garrison his fortresses; others he sent to Cyrene, that he might have some faithful subjects in that newly-acquired territory; and many more were assigned a residence in Alexandria, with the grant of the same privileges as Alexander had bestowed on the Macedonian inhabitants of that city.

In 316 B.C. the puppet-king Aridæus was privately put to death, by Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, and in the same year Alexander Ægeus was imprisoned with his mother Roxana, by Cassander, governor of Caria; and he also was murdered in 310 B.C. Even this, however, did not quite put an end to the mockery of dependence and deference; for it was not until the death of Hercules, the remaining son of Alexander the Great, by his wife Barsine, that the satraps put on crowns and took the name of kings.

By the year 315 B.C. the turbulent and ambitious Antigonus had acquired such power as excited the alarm of Seleucus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander (then governor of Macedonia), who entered into an alliance against him. Antigonus himself was not idle, for the year following he wrested from the grasp of Ptolemy, Palestine, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria. In consequence of this Palestine and its vicinity became for three years the theatre of war between Ptolemy and Antigonus, and during that time the Jews must have suffered much, as their country frequently changed masters.

[Antigonus.]

The consequence was, that many of the inhabitants voluntarily withdrew to Egypt, where, and particularly at Alexandria, they could enjoy freedom and peace under a mild government. During these wars Jerusalem does not, however, appear to have been molested, and was spared when Ptolemy gave up Samaria, Acco (Acre), Joppa, and Gaza, to pillage.

It was at the last-mentioned city, Gaza, that the great battle was fought between Ptolemy and Demetrius (312 B.C.), which, by the defeat of the latter, threw the country again into the hands of the satrap of Egypt. In this battle Demetrius had a large force of elephants, mounted by native Indian riders. But notwithstanding the alarm which they inspired, they contributed to his defeat through the confusion they produced, when annoyed and harassed by the prudent measures which Ptolemy took against them. They were all taken, and most of the Indians slain.

Seleucus had a joint command in this action. He was soon after furnished by

[Seleucus Nicator.]

Ptolemy with an inconsiderable force of two hundred horse and eight hundred foot, with which he might prosecute his own interests, and at the same time annoy Antigonus in the East. With this handful of men he crossed the desert and the Euphrates, and paused at Haran to increase his army in Mesopotamia. His entrance into Babylonia was like a triumphal procession, for the people, mindful of the justice of his previous administration, and the great qualities of character and conduct which he had displayed, flocked to his standard in crowds, and he recovered with the utmost ease not only the city and province of Babylon, but the whole of Media and Susiana; and he was enabled to establish his interest in this quarter upon so solid a foundation that it could no more be shaken, notwithstanding the momentary appearance of success which next year attended an attempt made by Demetrius to recover Babylon for his father

[Demetrius Poliorcetes.]

Antigonus. It is from this recovery of Babylon by Demetrius in October 312 B.C., twelve years after the death of Alexander, that the celebrated "Era of the Seleucidæ" commences. It is also called the "Greek" and the "Alexandrian Era;" while the Jews, because obliged to employ it in all their civil contracts, called it the "Era of Contracts." Some nations compute from the spring of the ensuing year; but that this, as some suppose, arose from the fact that Seleucus was not until then fully established in the possession of Babylon (after the attempt of Demetrius) may very well be doubted. It is more natural to resolve the difference into an adjustment of the era to the different times at which the year was commenced by different nations—some at the autumnal, and others at the vernal equinox*.

* It may be doubted whether the Era in its origin had any real reference to the taking of Babylon, although that event happened to occur in the year to which its commencement is referred. This Era long continued in general use in Western Asia. The Arabians, who called it the "Era

Meanwhile Demetrius gained an important advantage over the general (Cilles) whom Ptolemy had despatched to drive him out of Upper Syria, where he remained with the remnant of his army; and on this occasion the victor, following the example which had lately been set by Ptolemy, directed the prisoners which were taken to be restored. It is interesting to note the introduction of such civilized amenities into transactions so essentially savage, and so humiliating to the just pride of reason, as those which warfare involve and produce. When the news of this success reached Antigonus (then in Phrygia) he hastened to join his son; and the aspect of their joint forces was so formidable, that Ptolemy judged it prudent to evacuate his recent conquests in Syria. Having therefore caused most of the fortifications of the places he relinquished to be demolished, he withdrew into Egypt, laden with spoil, and attended by great numbers of Jews, who were weary of continuing in what seemed likely to become the troubled battle-ground between the great ruling powers of Egypt and Syria, and chose rather to avail themselves of the security and ample privileges by which the wise policy of Ptolemy invited them to settle in Egypt.

Elated by his successes, Antigonus conceived the design of reducing to his yoke the Nabathæan Arabs, who at this time inhabited the mountains of Seir. Availing himself of the absence of the active population of Petra at a great and distant fair in the desert, the general Athenæus sacked that remarkable metropolis, and departed with immense booty. But overcome with fatigue, the army halted on the way, and lay carelessly at rest, when it was surrounded and cut in pieces by the hosts of the returning Nabathæans. Sixty only escaped. Antigonus afterwards sent Demetrius to avenge this loss. But he, advancing to Petra, and perceiving the hazard and delay of the enterprise, was glad to compound with the people on terms which bore a show of honour to his father, without being disgraceful to them. Petra, which was the chief scene of these enterprises, was doubtless the city, in a valley of Mount Seir, which, after the oblivion of ages, has been brought to our knowledge and minutely described by Burckhardt, Mangles, Laborde, and other travellers. We notice this expedition chiefly for the sake of recording, that Demetrius on his return by way of the Dead Sea, took notice of the asphaltos of that lake, and gave such an account of it to Antigonus as led him to desire to render it a source of profit to his treasury. He therefore despatched the aged historian Hieronymus, with men to collect the asphaltos for the benefit of the government. The Arabs looked on quietly, and offered no interruption until a large quantity had been collected and preparations were made for carrying it away; then they came down with six thousand men, and surrounding those who were employed in this business, cut them in pieces. Hieronymus escaped. Thus we perceive that the Asphaltic Lake, otherwise useless, had become a source of wealth and object of contention on account of its bitumen.

We need not enter into the treaties and wars between the satraps, during the succeeding years. Antigonus remained in possession of Syria. In 306 B.C. Demetrius, who had been highly successful in Greece, invaded the island of Cyprus, and made the conquest of it after repelling Ptolemy, who came with a fleet to the assistance of his allies. This conquest was so pleasing to Antigonus that he thereupon assumed the title of king, and had such confidence in the duty and affection of his excellent son, that he saluted him (by letter) with the same title, thus making him the associate of his government. When this was heard in Egypt, the people, out of their attachment to Ptolemy, saluted him also as king, whereupon Lysimachus in Thrace, Seleucus in Babylon, and even Cassander in Macedonia,

of the two-horned" (*Dilkarnaim*), meaning Alexander, did not relinquish it till long after the Era of the Hegira had been adopted. It is still retained by the Syrian Christians under the name of the Era of Alexander. Even the Jews, who in the first instance had been obliged to adopt it from its general use in civil contracts, employed no other epoch until 1040 A.D., when, being expelled from Asia by the caliphs, and scattered about in Spain, England, Germany, Poland, and other western countries, they began to date from the Creation, although still without entirely dropping the Era of the Seleucidæ.

were hailed by the regal title, by the nations under their rule. This none of them strenuously forbade or opposed; and although they did not immediately call themselves kings on their coins and in their edicts, they all did so ere long, with more or less show of decent reluctance and delay. In those times, however, the kingly title was very common, and much less of special significance was connected with it than it has since acquired.

Elated by this and his other great successes, Antigonus cast his eyes upon Egypt. In 305 B.C. he collected in Syria an army of eighty thousand foot, eight thousand horse, and eighty-three elephants, and marched along the coast of Palestine to Gaza; to which point Demetrius also repaired by sea, with a fleet of one hundred and fifty ships of war, and one hundred store-ships. This formidable expedition failed through mismanagement on their side, met by the judgment and preparation shown on the part of Ptolemy. Antigonus retired from the Egyptian frontier in disgrace, not a little heightened by the avidity with which his own soldiers embraced the opportunity of escaping from his austere rule to the mild and paternal sway of the Egyptian king.

Meanwhile Seleucus had been consolidating in the East that power which ultimately made him the greatest of the successors of Alexander. By 303 B.C. he had established his dominion over all the eastern provinces to the borders of India, and in that year was preparing for the invasion of that country, when affairs called his attention to the west, and he concluded a treaty with the Indian king, from whom he received five hundred elephants — a fact which we particularly notice as explaining the frequent presence of that noble beast in the subsequent warfares in Syria and Palestine. Subsequent supplies were afterwards obtained from the same source, in order to keep up this favourite force in the armies of the Syrian kings *.

* The ancient Egyptians do not appear to have known the elephant, although quantities of the teeth were brought to the country and to Palestine. We do not remember to have met with a single instance in which this animal is described as being figured on the old monuments of that country.

At last the several kings, wearied out with the troubles and conflicts which the insatiable and turbulent ambition of Antigonus occasioned, made common cause against him, Seleucus taking the lead, and bringing the largest force into the field. The belligerents met and fought in battle, intended by all to be decisive, at Ipsus in Phrygia, in the year 301 B.C. Antigonus brought into the field between seventy and eighty thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and seventy elephants; and Seleucus and his confederates had sixty-four thousand infantry, ten thousand five hundred cavalry, above one hundred chariots armed with scythes, *and four hundred elephants.* The courageous old man, Antigonus, now fourscore and upwards, behaved with his usual valour and conduct, but not with his usual spirit. Seleucus, by an adroit interposition of his elephants, managed to prevent Demetrius from properly supporting his father with the cavalry, which he commanded; and the final result was, that Antigonus fell on the field of battle pierced by many arrows, while Demetrius managed with a poor remnant of the army to escape to Ephesus. He survived seventeen years, and took an active part in the affairs of that time, but not so as to bring him under our future notice.

This great victory was followed by a treaty between the four potentates who had weathered the storm which had raged since the death of Alexander, being Seleucus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander. Each was formally to assume the royal dignity, and to govern his provinces with imperial power. The distribution was made on the principle of each retaining what he already had, and taking his due share of the empire which Antigonus had lost with life. To Cassander was allotted Macedonia and Greece; to Lysimachus, Thrace, Bithynia, and some of the adjacent provinces; to Ptolemy, Libya, Egypt, Arabia Petræa, *Palestine*, and Cœle-Syria; to Seleucus, all the rest, being in fact the lion's share—including many provinces in Syria, Asia-Minor, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and the East as far as the frontiers of India.

This settlement must have been highly satisfactory to the Jews, whom it restored to

the dominion of Ptolemy, with whose generally beneficent government, and particular favour to themselves, they had every reason to be satisfied. The prospects of durable peace, under the shadow of so great a king, must also have been contemplated with peculiar satisfaction by a people who suffered so much of the horrors and penalties, without sharing in the contingent honours and benefits, of war.

They were not disappointed. Ptolemy, now relieved from his long conflict, and settled firmly upon his throne, applied himself with great and laudable diligence to the improvement of his dominions. One great point of his policy was really to *attach* to his rule the several nations which had become subject to it. From this policy sprang the favours which he showered upon the Jews, and the indulgence with which, notwithstanding their peculiarities, they were on all occasions treated. The most perfect religious toleration was established by this eminent monarch, whose interest it was to harmonise the differences of religious practice and opinion which existed between his Greek and Egyptian subjects: the religion of the Jews was comprehended in this indulgence; and their synagogue was as much tolerated and respected as the temples of Isis and of Jupiter. Ptolemy made Alexandria the metropolis of his empire, and gave full effect to the intention of its great founder by taking such measures as ere long rendered it the first commercial city in the world. This, among others, was a circumstance calculated to attract the Jews to that city; as, first, their long absence from their native land—during the Captivity, and then the troubles of war in that land—troubles peculiarly unfavourable to the peaceful pursuits and hopes of agriculture—had already turned their attention towards commerce.

Seleucus, between whose territories and those of Ptolemy, Palestine was now situated, saw the wisdom of the policy followed by the king of Egypt, and applied himself with great vigour to work it out in his own dominions. In those dominions many fine cities had been entirely destroyed, and others greatly injured by the ravages of war. To repair these losses, Seleucus built many new cities, among which are reckoned sixteen which he, from his father, called Antiochia or Antioch; nine to which he gave his own name; six on which he bestowed that of his mother Laodicea; six which he called Apamea after his first wife, and one after his last wife Stratonice. Of all these towns the most celebrated was the city of Antioch, on the Orontes in Syria, which became the metropolitan residence of all the succeeding kings, and, in a later day, of the Roman governors; and which has ever since survived, and which still exists, and retains some relative consequence by virtue of the corresponding decline of all prosperity and population in the country in which it is found. Its name will occur very often in the remainder of our narrative. Next to Antioch in importance was Seleucia on the Tigris, which may in fact be considered the capital of the eastern portion of the empire. It was situated about fifty miles north-by-east of Babylon, twenty-three miles below the site of the present city of Baghdad, and just opposite to the ancient city of Ctesiphon. This city (founded in 293 B.C.) tended much to the final ruin and desolation of Babylon. Great privileges were granted to the citizens; and on this account many of the inhabitants of Babylon removed thither; and after the transfer of the trade to Seleucia, these removals became still more frequent. It was in this manner that Babylon was gradually depopulated; but the precise period when it became entirely deserted cannot now be ascertained. It may be interesting to note this, as many of the eastern Jews were involved in whatever transactions took place in this quarter, which, from the time of the Captivity to this day, has never been destitute of a large and often influential Jewish population. But *now* Babylon itself is not more desolate—is even less desolate—has more to mark it as the site of a great city of old times, than the superseding Seleucia, which only received existence in the last days of Babylon. We have ourselves walked over the ground it occupied, and found the site of the royal city only marked by the parallel embankments of ancient aqueducts,

and by the consolidated grit and debris which devote to utter barrenness, in this primeval country, the spots which towns once occupied, as if man had branded the ground by the treading of his feet.

In his newly founded towns it was the policy of Seleucus to induce as many as possible of the Jews to settle by important privileges and immunities, such as those which Ptolemy had extended to them. The consequence was that the Jews were attracted to these spots in such numbers, and especially to Antioch, that in them they formed nearly as large a proportion of the inhabitants as at Alexandria itself.

In all this, we think it is not difficult to perceive a further development of the Divine plan, which now, as the times advanced, dictated the dispersion of numerous bodies of Jews among the Gentile nations—while the nation still maintained in its own land the standards of ceremonial worship and of doctrine—with the view of making the nations acquainted with certain truths and great principles, which should work in their minds as leaven until the times of quickening arrived.

During the time of Ptolemy Soter the prosperity of the Jews was much strengthened by the internal administration of the excellent high-priest Simon the Just. In 300 he succeeded Onias I., who had in 321 succeeded Jaddua, the high-priest in the time of Alexander the Great. Simon repaired and fortified the city and temple of Jerusalem with strong and lofty walls; and made a spacious cistern, or reservoir of water, "in compass as a sea."* He is reported to have completed the canon of the Old Testament by the addition of the books of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi. This is not unlikely, as also that the book of Chronicles was completed in its present state; for the genealogy of David in the first book comes down to about the year 300 B.C.; and it may also be remarked, that in the catalogue of high-priests as given in Nehemiah, Jaddua is mentioned in such a manner as to intimate that he had been for some time dead. The Jews also affirm that Simon was "the *last* of the Great Synagogue," which some ingeniously paraphrase into "the last president of the great council, or Sanhedrim, among the high-priests;"† whereas it seems clear that no Sanhedrim at or before this time existed. And from the fact that this "great synagogue" is not (like the Sanhedrim) described as being composed of seventy members, but of one hundred and twenty, among whom were Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, and Malachi, it would appear that it rather denoted the succession of devout and patriotic men who distinguished themselves after the Captivity, by their labours towards the collection and revision of the sacred books, and the settlement and improvement of the civil and religious institutions of their country, and of whom Simon, by completing the sacred canon, became the last. Simon died in 291 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Eleazer.

[P. Soter and his wife Berenice.]

Not long after this (285 B.C.), the king of Egypt, having conceived just cause of displeasure against his eldest son Ptolemy Keraunus, took measures to secure the succession to his youngest son Ptolemy Philadelphus. His advanced age warned him that he had no time to lose; he there-

[P. Philadelphus and his sister-wife Arsinoe.]

* Ecclus. i. 1—3. The whole chapter, entitled "The praise of Simon, the son of Onias," is devoted to a splendid eulogium on his deeds and character.

† Hales, ii. 538.

fore resigned the diadem to Philadelphus ('the brother-loving'), and enrolled himself among the royal life-guards. He died two years after (283 B.C.) at the age of eighty-four, forty years after the death of Alexander.

As for P. Keraunus, he ultimately sought refuge at the court of Seleucus, by whom he was most kindly received and entertained; but he justified the ill opinion of him on which his own father had acted by destroying his benefactor. This was in 280 B.C., only seven months after Seleucus had consummated the greatness of his empire by the overthrow of Lysimachus, who had himself previously added the kingdom of Macedonia to his own of Thrace. Thus Seleucus became the possessor of three out of the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander had, on the defeat of Antigonus, been divided. After his death, P. Keraunus managed to seat himself on the Macedonian throne; but the very next year he was taken prisoner and cut in pieces by the Gauls, who had invaded Macedonia.

Seleucus was succeeded in what may be called the throne of Asia by his son Antiochus Soter. This prince, after he had secured the eastern provinces of the empire, endeavoured to reduce the western, but his general Patrocles was defeated in Bithynia, and the loss of his army disabled him from immediately prosecuting his claims upon Macedonia and Thrace. Meanwhile the sceptre of Macedonia was seized by the vigorous hands of Alexander Gonatus, a son of Demetrius Poliorcetes,

[Antiochus Theos.]

and consequently a grandson of Antigonus, and to him Antiochus at length felt himself constrained to cede that country; and the family of Antigonus reigned there until the time of Perseus, the last king, who was conquered by the Romans. Antiochus Soter died in 261 B.C., after nominating as his successor his second son ANTIOCHUS THEOS ('the God'). This prince was his son by his mother-in-law Stratonice, whom his too indulgent father had divorced to please him.

The accession of Antiochus II. took place about the middle of the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus in Egypt. This last-named monarch was quite as tolerant and as friendly to the Jews as his father had been. He was a great encourager of learning and patron of learned men. Under his auspices was executed that valuable translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, called the Septuagint, from the seventy, or seventy-two, translators said to have been employed thereon. Eleazer was still the high-priest, and appears to have interested himself much in this undertaking, and was careful to furnish for the purpose correct copies of the sacred books. The date of 278 B.C. is usually assigned to this translation. Thus the Jewish Scriptures were made accessible to the heathen. It is unquestionable that copies of this version, or extracts from it, found their way in process of time into the libraries of the learned and curious of Greece and Rome; and there is no means of calculating the full extent of its operation in opening the minds of the more educated and thoughtful class among the heathen to the perception of some of the great truths which they could learn only from that book, and which it was now becoming important that they should know. It was even a great matter that they should have the means of knowing clearly what the Jews believed, whatever they may themselves have thought of that belief. This version soon came into common use among the Jews themselves everywhere, even in Palestine, the original Hebrew having become a learned language. Indeed, the quotations from the Old Testament made by the Evangelists and Apostles, and even by Christ himself, are generally, if not always, from this version.

In the third year of Antiochus a long and bloody war broke out between him and Ptolemy Philadelphus. The latter king, bending under the weight of years, commanded by his generals, while Antiochus, in

the vigour of youth, led his armies in person. Neither monarch appears to have gained any very decided advantages over the other; while we know that much was lost by Antiochus; for, while his attention was engaged by wars in the west, the eastern provinces of his vast empire—Parthia, Bactria, and other provinces beyond the Tigris—revolted from his dominion: this was in 250 B.C., from which the foundation of the Parthian empire *may* be dated; but it is perhaps better, with the Parthians themselves, to date it from the ensuing reign, when they completely established their independence. It is here, however, we are to seek the real beginning of the Parthian empire, which was ultimately destined to set bounds to the conquests of the Romans, and to vanquish the vanquishers of the world. The immediate result was that Antiochus was obliged, in the year 249 B.C., to make peace with Philadelphus on such terms as he could obtain. These were, that he should repudiate his beloved queen, who was his half-sister, and marry Berenice, a daughter of Philadelphus, and that the first male issue of the marriage should succeed to the throne.

As Philadelphus on his part gave for the dower of his daughter half the revenues of Palestine, Phœnicia, and Cœle-Syria, the Jews may seem to have come partly under the dominion of Antiochus. But as the king retained the other half in his own hands, and as the revenues of Judea were always farmed by the high-priest, the circumstance made no change in their condition. Besides, the arrangement was too soon broken up to produce any marked effect. These were the important nuptials between "the king of the north," and "the king's daughter of the south," which the prophet Daniel had long before predicted*. It was only two years after this (247 B.C.) that Philadelphus died; immediately on which Antiochus put away Berenice and restored his beloved Laodicea; but she, fearing his fickleness, poisoned him, and set her son Seleucus Callinicus ['illustrious conqueror'] upon the throne (246 B.C.). On this Berenice sought shelter with her son (the heir by treaty) in the sacred groves of Daphne (near Antioch); but at the instigation of his mother, Callinicus tore her from that sanctuary, and slew her, with her infant son.

[Seleucus Callinicus.]

* Dan. xi. 6.

Now Berenice was full sister to the new king of Egypt, Ptolemy III., surnamed Euergetes†, who immediately placed himself

[Ptolemy Euergetes.]

at the head of his army to avenge her wrongs. He was eminently successful. He entered Syria, slew the queen Laodicea, and overran the whole empire as far as the Tigris on the east, and Babylon on the south‡. On he marched, from province to province, levying heavy contributions, until commotions in Egypt obliged him to abandon his enterprise and return home. On his way he called at Jerusalem, where he offered many sacrifices, and made large presents to the temple. There is little doubt but that the high-priest took the opportunity of pointing

† We may add in a note that this title (*the Benefactor*) was conferred on Ptolemy by his Egyptian subjects on his return from his eastern expedition. He recovered and brought back, with other booty to an immense amount, 2500 idolatrous images, chiefly those which Cambyses had taken away from the Egyptians. When he restored the idols to their temples, the Egyptians manifested their gratitude by saluting him with this title. They were less prone than the Greeks of Asia to *deify* their kings.

‡ The inscription found at Adule by Cosmas gives a more extensive range to his operations, affirming that, after having subdued the west of Asia, he ultimately crossed the Euphrates, and brought under his dominion, not only Mesopotamia and Babylonia, but Media, Persia, and the whole country as far as Bactria. As this needs more collateral support than it has received, we adopt the more limited statement in the text.

out to him those prophecies of Daniel* which had been accomplished in the late events and in his recent achievements; and this may probably have been the cause of his presents and offerings.

The high-priest of the Jews was then Onias II. Eleazer, the high-priest at the time the Greek translation of the Scriptures was made, died in 276 B.C., and was succeeded not by his own son Onias, but by Manasses, a son of Jaddua. He died in 250 B.C., and Onias III. then became high-priest. As usual, Onias farmed the tribute exacted from Judea by the Egyptians. But, growing covetous as he advanced in years, he withheld, under one pretence or another, the twenty talents which his predecessors had been accustomed to pay every year to the king of Egypt as a tribute for the whole people. This went on for twenty-four years, and, the arrears then amounting to four hundred and eighty talents, the king deemed it full time to take energetic measures to secure the payment of this portion of the royal revenues. He sent an officer named Athenion to demand the payment of what was already due, and to require a more punctual payment in future, with the threat that, unless measures of compliance were taken, he would confiscate all the lands of Judea, and send a colony of soldiers to occupy them. The infatuated priest was disposed to neglect the warning and brave the danger, which filled all the people with consternation. But the evils which might have been apprehended were averted through the policy and address of Joseph, the high-priest's nephew, who generously borrowed the money upon his own credit, paid the tribute, and so ingratiated himself at the Egyptian court that he obtained the lucrative privilege of farming the king's revenues, not only in Judea and Samaria, but in Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria.

Seleucus Callinicus, in his emergencies, had promised to his younger brother Antiochus Hierax, who was governor of Asia Minor, the independent possession of several cities in that province, for his assistance in the war with P. Euergetes. But when he had (243 B.C.) obtained a truce of ten years from the Egyptian king, he refused to fulfil this engagement. This led to a bloody war between the two brothers, in which Seleucus was so generally unsuccessful that it would appear as if the title of Callinicus [*illustrious conqueror*] had been bestowed upon him in derision. He was, however, ultimately successful through the losses and weakness which other enemies brought upon Antiochus Hierax ['the Hawk'—from his rapacity], who was in the end obliged to take refuge in Egypt, where he was put to death in 240 B.C. Towards the end of this war Mesopotamia appears to have been the scene of action; for in that quarter occurred the battle in which eight thousand Babylonian Jews (subjects of Seleucus) and four thousand Macedonians defeated one hundred and twenty thousand Gauls whom Antiochus had in his pay†.

Seleucus Callinicus being now relieved from the western war, turned his attention to the recovery of the eastern provinces which had revolted in the time of his father. Renewed troubles in Syria prevented any result from his first attempt in 236 B.C.; and in his second, in 230, he was defeated and taken prisoner by the Parthians, whose king, Arsaces, treated the royal captive with the respect becoming his rank, but never set him at liberty. He died in 226 B.C. by a fall from his horse. On this event, Seleucus III. inherited the remains of his father's kingdom. This prince was equally weak in body and mind, and therefore most unaptly surnamed Keraunus ['thunder']. When a war broke out in 223 B.C., his imbecile conduct so provoked his generals, that he was poisoned by their contrivance.

Of these troubles and dissensions in Syria, Ptolemy Euergetes, in Egypt, took due advantage in strengthening and extending his own empire. In 222 B.C., the year after the murder of Seleucus III., his reign was terminated through his murder by his own son Ptolemy, who succeeded him, and who, on account of this horrid deed, was ironically surnamed Philopator ['father-loving']. P. Euergetes is popularly considered the last good king of Egypt, which is true in the

* Dan. xi. 6—8.

† Macc. viii. 20.

sense that the succeeding Ptolemies governed far worse than the first three of that name—all of whom were just and humane men, and whose reigns were glorious and beneficent.

[Ptolemy Philopator.]

If Euergetes was inferior in some respects to Lagus and Philadelphus, he was more than in the same degree superior to his own successors.

At this time the Jews had for about sixty years enjoyed almost uninterrupted tranquillity under the shadow of the Egyptian throne. During this period circumstances led them into much intercourse with the Greeks, who were their masters and the ruling people in Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and, in fact, in all the country west of the Tigris. A predominance of Greeks and of Grecian ideas, which has dotted the surface of westernmost Asia with frequent monuments of Grecian art, was not without much effect upon the Jews in this period. Among other indications, the increasing prevalence, in and after this period, of Greek proper names among the Jews, may be taken. There is ample evidence that the more opulent classes cultivated the language, and imbibed some of the manners, of the Greeks. It is also apparent that some acquaintance with the Greek philosophers was obtained, and made wild work in Jewish minds. Nothing manifests this more clearly than the rise of the SADDUCEES, whose system was nothing more than a very awkward attempt to graft the negations of Greek philosophy upon the Hebrew creed. It confirms this view, that the sect of the Sadducees was never popular with the mass of the nation, but was always confined to those whose condition in life brought them the most into contact with the notions of the Greeks, the wealthy, noble, and ruling classes. Priests—even high-priests—sometimes adopted the views of this sect.

It has already been stated that the high-priest Simon the Just was counted as the last of "the great synagogue," who had applied themselves to the great work of collecting, revising, and completing the canon of the Old Testament. To this followed "a new synagogue," which applied itself diligently to the work of expounding and commenting upon the completed canon. This school lasted until the time of Judah Hakkadosh, who, to prevent these comments or "traditions" (which were deemed of equal authority with the text) from being lost, after the Dispersion, committed them to writing, in the Mishna, which, with its comments, has since constituted the great law-book of the Jews, from which, even more than from the Scriptures, they have deduced their religious and civil obligations. The founder and first president of this school, or synagogue, was Antigonus Socho, or Sochæus. He (or, according to some accounts, his successor Joseph) was fond of teaching that God was to be served wholly from disinterested motives, of pure love and reverence, founded on the contemplation of his infinite perfections, without regard to the prospects of future reward, or to the dread of future punishment. This was either misunderstood or wilfully perverted by some of his scholars, and in particular by Sadoc and Baithos, who declared their disbelief that there was any future state of reward or punishment. Perhaps *they* stopped at this; but the views ultimately embodied in the creed of the sect which took its name from the first of these persons, inculcated that the soul was mortal like the body, and perished with it, and consequently that there was not, nor could be, any resurrection. They also held that there was no spiritual being, good or bad*. They rejected the doctrine of an overruling Providence, and maintained that all events resulted from the free and unconstrained actions of men. That, like the Samaritans, they rejected all the sacred books save the Pentateuch, is inferred from the unsupported authority of a passage of doubtful interpretation in Josephus†. And as there is some

* Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8.
† Antiq. xiii. 10, 6.

evidence to the contrary, it is safer to conclude that they admitted the authority of the other books, but ascribed to them an inferior value and importance than they did to the Pentateuch. But it is certain that they rejected absolutely the "Traditions," to which such supreme importance was attached by the mass of the nation. This was a good thing in them; and in this they agreed with Jesus Christ and his Apostles, who were opposed to them and by them on every other point. In fact, it would seem as if this sect in its beginning was intended merely as an opposition to the Tradition party, which was likely to be regarded with apprehension by the more open and thinking minds. The doctrinal errors had no necessary connection with the anti-tradition zeal of the party, and were probably grafted on it through the speculative tendencies of some of its original leaders.

After the murder of Seleucus Keraunus, who left no son, the kingdom of Syria fell to his brother Antiochus III., who had been brought up at Seleucia on the Tigris. He came to Antioch, and his reign was so productive in great events that he ultimately acquired the surname of "the Great." He carried on the wars against the revolted provinces with such success that he soon recovered almost all Asia Minor, Media, Persia, and Babylonia. The effeminate character of Ptolemy Philopator, who was a mean voluptuary, abandoned to the most shameful vices, and entirely governed by the creatures and instruments of his pleasures, led Antiochus to contemplate the feasibility of obtaining possession of the valuable provinces of Cœle-Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine. Great part of the first of these provinces, with the city of Damascus, he easily acquired, through the defection of Theodotian, the governor—a brave man rendered a traitor by the desire of revenge, and by contempt for the character of his master. The campaign was terminated by a truce for four months, which circumstances made desirable for both parties before prosecuting the war. Negotiations for a peace were indeed entered into; but as both parties claimed Cœle-Syria and Palestine in virtue of the treaty by which the empire of Alexander was divided after the fall of Antigonus, the truce expired without anything having been concluded.

The war was therefore resumed in 218 B.C. Antiochus marched into the disputed territory and carried all things before him. Forcing the passes of Lebanon, he penetrated into Phœnicia, and after securing the coast, marched into the interior, and brought under his power all the cities of Galilee; after which he passed beyond Jordan and won the ancient territory of the tribes beyond that river, with the metropolis, Rabbath-Ammon, which Ptolemy Philadelphus had fortified, and named, after himself, Philadelphia. At the same time, Antiochus subjugated some of the neighbouring Arabs; and on his return threw garrisons into Samaria and some of the adjacent towns; and at the close of this brilliant campaign, he took up his winter quarters in Ptolemais (afterwards Cæsarea).

These large and repeated losses at length roused all the energies which Ptolemy was capable of exerting. He forsook his drunken revels, and, placing himself at the head of an army of seventy thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and seventy-three elephants, he marched from Pelusium through the desert, and encamped at Raphia, a place between Rhinoculura (El Arish) and Gaza. Antiochus, with the confidence of victory which his recent successes inspired, advanced to meet him at that place, with an army of sixty-two thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry, and one hundred and twenty elephants. He was totally defeated, with such loss that he made no attempt to repair it, but abandoned all his conquests and withdrew to Antioch. By a peace, concluded soon after, he relinquished all pretension to the disputed territories. Philopator now recovered all the former possessions of his crown without striking a blow, for the cities hastened to emulate each other in renewing their homage to him by their ambassadors. Among these the Jews, always partial to the Egyptian rule, were the most forward; and the king was induced to pay a visit to Jerusalem, as well as to the other principal cities. There he offered sacrifices according to the Jewish law, and presented gifts to the temple.

But, unhappily, the beauty of the building, and the peculiar order and solemnity of the worship, excited the curiosity of the king to see the interior. Simon II., who had but lately succeeded Onias II. in the high-priesthood, remonstrated against this intention, intimating that it was unlawful even for the priests to enter the inner sanctuary. Philopator answered haughtily, that although *they* were deprived of that honour, *he* ought not; and pressed forward to enter the sacred place. But while he was passing through the inner court for that purpose, he was "shaken like a reed, and fell speechless to the ground," overcome either by his own superstitious fears, or, as the historian seems to intimate, by a supernatural dread and horror cast on him from above. He was carried out half dead, and speedily departed from the city full of displeasure against the Jewish people. He therefore commenced a most barbarous persecution against the Jews in Egypt on his return home. In the first place he caused a decree to be inscribed on brazen pillars at the palace gate, that none should enter there who did not sacrifice to the gods he worshipped—which effectually excluded the Jews from all access to his person. Then he deprived the Jews in Alexandria of the high civil privileges they had enjoyed, degrading them from the first to the third or last class of inhabitants. He also ordered them to be formally enrolled, and that at the time of their enrolment, the mark of an ivy-leaf (one of the insignia of *his* god, Bacchus) should be impressed upon them with a hot iron; if any refused this mark they were to be made slaves; and whoever opposed the decree was to be put to death. Again, they were tempted to apostacy by the promise of restoration to the rank of citizens of the first class; but of the many thousands of Jews then at Alexandria, only three hundred appear to have submitted to the humiliating condition, and these were held in such abhorrence by the majority of their countrymen, and were so pointedly shunned, and excluded from the society of their old associates, that the king, when acquainted with it, was highly enraged, and regarded this as an opposition to his authority; he vowed to extirpate the whole nation. To begin with the Jews in Egypt, he ordered them all to be brought in chains to Alexandria. Having thus brought them all together, they were shut up in the Hippodrome, which was a large enclosure outside the city, built for the purpose of horse-racing and other public amusements, where he intended to expose them as a spectacle, to be destroyed by elephants. At the appointed time, the people assembled in crowds, and the elephants were on the spot; but the effects of a drunken bout, the preceding night, prevented the attendance of the king, and caused a postponement of the show. The next day a similar *disappointment* proceeded from the same unseemly cause. But on the third, the king managed to be present, and the elephants were brought out after they had been intoxicated with wine and frankincense to render them more ferocious. But they spent their fury not on the unhappy Jews, but turned upon the spectators, of whom they destroyed great numbers. This, connected with some unusual appearances in the air, appeared to the king and his attendants so manifest an interposition of a Divine Power in behalf of the Jews, that he instantly ordered them to be set at liberty; and fearful of having provoked the vengeance of Heaven, he hastened to restore the Jews to their former privileges by rescinding all the decrees he had issued against them. Now also, his better reason gaining sway; considering that those who had so signally evinced their fidelity to their God were not likely to be unfaithful to their king, he bestowed upon them many marks of his munificence and confidence. Among other things, he abandoned to their disposal the three hundred apostates, who were speedily put to death by their offended brethren*.

* It is right to apprise the reader that the whole of this account of the visit of Philopator to Jerusalem and its consequences, down to this point, is not in Josephus, but is given on the sole authority of the author of the *third* book of Maccabees. In all, there are *five* books of Maccabees, of which *two* only are included in *our* Apocrypha. The *third*, which relates solely to this persecution of the Jews by Ptolemy Philopator, exists in Greek, and is found in some ancient manuscripts of the Greek Septuagint, particularly in the Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts. There is also a Syriac version of it from the Greek; but it

Ptolemy Philopator died in 205 B.C., leaving his crown to Ptolemy Epiphanes, then a child five years of age. Meanwhile Antiochus III.

[Ptolemy Epiphanes.]

had won the surname of Great, by his eminent successes in the East, where he restored the ancient supremacy of the Seleucidæ. At the death of Philopator, he had but recently returned from his eastern wars. He was not slow in perceiving the advantage which he might take of the infancy of the new king in accomplishing what had been one of the first objects of his reign. This design again exposed unhappy Palestine to all the horrors of war. The first campaign put Antiochus in possession of the standing bone of contention, Cœle-Syria and Palestine. It is remarkable that on this occasion the Jews relinquished their usual attachment to the Egyptian yoke, and took a very decided part with Antiochus. For this many reasons may be conceived, but none are distinctly known; we have, however, no doubt that one of them may be found in the indulgent consideration with which the Jews of Babylonia and other eastern provinces had been treated by Antiochus—a fact which could not fail to be known in Palestine and at Jerusalem. The next year, however, Antiochus having been called away into Asia Minor, Palestine was speedily recovered by Scopas, the Egyptian general, who did not fail to make the Jews aware of his consciousness of the favour to Antiochus which they had manifested. The Egyptians were, however, soon again driven out of the country by Antiochus, and on this occasion such important services were rendered him by the Jews, and when he came to Jerusalem (198 B.C.) so lively were their demonstrations of joy, that the king, to confirm their attachment to his government, and to reward their services, granted them many important favours; and, aware that there were no points on which they were more anxious than in what concerned their city and temple, he declared his intention to restore the city to its ancient splendour and dignity, and thoroughly to repair the temple at his own cost; he guaranteed the inviolability of the sacred place from the intrusion of strangers; and by liberal grants, he made ample provision for the due and orderly performance of the sacred services. Antiochus also expressed his confidence in the attachment of the Jews by establishing colonies of them, on very advantageous terms, in Phrygia, Lydia, and other districts of doubtful fidelity—a circumstance which accounts for the great number of Jews scattered through those countries at the preaching of the gospel*. But it was the destiny of Antiochus to come into contact with the iron power which was ere long to break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, and to make their glory a vain thing. The ROMANS had already become great, and began to interfere with their usual haughtiness in the affairs of the East. The successful termination of the second Punic war had covered them with renown, and had spread their fame far and wide; and already they had indicated to sagacious persons, by the reduction of Macedonia to the state of a subject kingdom, the ultimate tendencies of their great and still increasing power. Antiochus regarded this phenomenon with some apprehension, and perceiving, at the same time, what appeared advantageous opportunities of recovering in the north all that had belonged to the first Seleucus, he felt disposed to bring his southern contest to

has never been inserted in the Vulgate, or in our English Bibles, but English translations of it exist. It appears to have been the work of an Alexandrian Jew; and while we admit that the book is full of absurdities, and that the authority is of very little value in itself, yet we think that in the outline of facts, as related in the text, there is so much appearance of probability, and so many small agreements with the accounts which history has preserved of the manners and ideas and circumstances of the times, as well as with the character of the king, that we are disposed to regard it as substantially true. The silence of Josephus is indeed a suspicious circumstance, to which we are willing that due weight should be given; but it will be noticed by every reader that the history of Josephus is remarkably brief at this period.

* 1 Pet. i. 1; James i. 1.

a conclusion. He therefore temporised with the Egyptians, whose power he had greatly underrated, and made an offer of his beautiful daughter Cleopatra in marriage with the young king of Egypt, as soon as he should become of age; promising. as her dower, to restore the provinces of Cœle-Syria and Palestine, which he had wrested from Egypt. The princess was accordingly betrothed to P. Epiphanes; but the marriage did not actually take place until 192 B.C., when the young monarch reached the eighteenth year of his age.

Antiochus availed himself of this settlement of affairs to prosecute his other plans. He reduced the maritime Greek cities of Asia Minor, and, crossing the Hellespont, wrested the Chersonese from the weakened hands of the Macedonian king. This brought him into direct and fatal collision with the Romans. And here it may be observed, that long before this the political sagacity of Ptolemy Philadelphus had detected the nascent greatness of the Roman state, and had anxiously cultivated its friendship. This also had been the policy of his successors; and the guardians of the young king, when apprehensive of the danger of Antiochus, had placed him under the guardianship of the republic.

When Antiochus had passed into Europe and taken possession of Thrace, the Romans sent an embassy to require restitution not only of all he had taken from Philip of Macedon, but of all that he had taken from their ward the king of Egypt. The Syrian king answered the requisition as haughtily as it was made; and it was manifest that an appeal to arms could not be far distant. What brought on the actual conflict was the passage of Antiochus into Greece at the invitation of the Ætolians, who made him their commander-in-chief. In Greece his proceedings were not taken with that ability which distinguished the earlier part of his career, and in 191 B.C. he was utterly routed at Thermopylæ, and compelled to withdraw from Europe by the consul Acilius Glabrio. The marriage of his daughter with Ptolemy had been completed the year before this at Raphia, but he still retained possession of the provinces to be ceded*, and endeavoured to corrupt his daughter to betray the interests of her husband. But he was disappointed. She was more attached to Ptolemy than to her father: and, being probably dissatisfied at his breach of promise, she joined her husband in an embassy to Rome in 191 B.C., to congratulate the Romans on driving Antiochus out of Greece, and to assure the senate of the readiness of the king and queen to conform themselves to its directions.

Antiochus was now driven to seek peace with Rome; but the terms which they offered were so hard that he could not bring himself to accept them. In all human probability he had brought himself into this condition by his inability to appreciate the value of the advice tendered to him by Hannibal, who, expelled from Carthage, had in 195 B.C. sought refuge at his court; and who, while he encouraged his enmity to the Romans, had exhorted him to make Italy the seat of the war. In 190 B.C., Cornelius Scipio (consul) assisted by his brother Africanus, passed over into Asia to conduct the war against Antiochus. Under their able management, it was soon brought to a conclusion, and the Syrian king was compelled from his capital of Antioch to sue for peace, which he obtained on very humiliating terms, but not essentially harder than those which he had at first refused. He relinquished all Asia Minor west of the Taurus; he agreed to pay all the expenses of the war, estimated at eighteen thousand Euobic talents, by regulated instalments; he was to deliver up his elephants and his ships of war (excepting twelve) to the Romans; and he was to give into their hands Hannibal and other eminent foreigners who had sought protection at his court. The aged Carthaginian and another contrived to make their escape; but the rest were given up, together with the twelve hostages for the observance of the treaty, among whom the king's younger son, Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, was one. After this,

* Jerome and Appian say that Antiochus did surrender these provinces; and Josephus appears to concur with them, intimating that the revenues were paid to the Egyptian king. (Ant. xii. 4, 1.) But Polybius denies it; and this denial is confirmed by the fact that they still remained in the possession of the sons and successors of Antiochus.

Antiochus withdrew to the eastern provinces of his empire, where he endeavoured to collect the arrears of tribute due to him, to defray his heavy engagements to the Romans. There he was slain, two years after, by the natives of Elymais in Persia, when he attempted to seize the treasures contained in their rich temple. This was in 187 B.C., in the fifty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign. The leading events of his reign had been foreshown by Daniel (xi. 13—19).

Simon II., who was high-priest of the Jews at the time of the unhappy visit of Ptolemy IV. to Jerusalem, died in 195 B.C., after an administration of twenty-two years. He was succeeded by his son Onias III. Onias was a person of great piety, and of mild and amiable disposition, and well worthy of better times than those in which he lived, and of a better end than it was his lot to experience. During the first years of his administration, when his excellent intentions received full effect under the favourable auspices of Antiochus and his successor, "the holy city was inhabited in all peace, and the laws were kept very well." The nation was also at this time held in such high estimation that the sovereigns of the neighbouring countries courted its friendship, and made magnificent offerings to the temple. And we are persuaded that this was not merely on account of the Jews, but with the design of honouring and with the hope of propitiating their God, JEHOVAH, whose fame was by this time widely extended among the nations, and his power acknowledged and feared by many of them.

Seleucus IV., surnamed Philopator, the eldest son of Antiochus the Great, succeeded to the throne of his father, and to the heavy obligations under which he lay to the Romans. He was as well disposed towards the Jews as his father had been; and, notwithstanding his embarrassments, gave orders that the charges of the public worship should continue to be defrayed out of his own treasury. But subsequently, upon the information of Simon, a Benjamite, who was made governor of the temple, and had quarrelled with Onias, that the treasury of the Jerusalem temple was very rich, and abundantly more than sufficient to supply the sacrifices and oblations, the king, who was greatly straitened for money to raise the amount required by the Romans, sent his treasurer Heliodorus to seize and bring him the reported treasure. Heliodorus concealed the object of his journey until he reached Jerusalem, when he made it known to the high-priest, and demanded the quiet surrender of the money. Onias informed him, in reply, that there was indeed considerable treasure in the temple; but by no means of such large amount as had been reported. Great part of it consisted of holy gifts, and offerings consecrated to God, and the appropriation of which could not be disturbed without sacrilege. The rest had been placed there by way of security, for the relief of widows and orphans, who claimed it as their property; and a considerable sum had been deposited there by Hyrcanus (the son of that Joseph who obtained the farming of the revenues from Ptolemy Euergetes, as before related), a person of great opulence and high rank. He added that, being by virtue of his office the guardian of this wealth, he could not consent to its being taken from the right owners, and thereby disgrace his office and profane the sanctity of that holy place *which was held in reverence by all the world.* Determined to fulfil his mission, whatever impression this statement may have made upon his mind, Heliodorus marched directly to the temple, and was there vainly opposed by the high-priest and the other ministers of the sacred services. The outer gates were ordered to be demolished; and the whole city was in the utmost agonies of apprehension. But when Heliodorus was about to enter, at the head of his Syrians, he was struck with a panic terror, similar to that which Ptolemy Philopator had before experienced, and, falling to the ground, speechless, he was carried off for dead by his guard. Onias prayed for him, and he recovered, and made all haste to quit the city. His plan being thus frustrated, the guilty Simon had the effrontery to charge Onias himself with having procured this visit from Heliodorus; some believed it; and in consequence there arose hostile conflicts be-

tween the parties of Onias and Simon, in which many lives were lost. At last Onias resolved to proceed himself to Antioch, and lay the whole matter before Seleucus. He was favourably received by the king, who heard and credited his statements, and, in consequence, decreed the banishment of Simon from his native country. This was in 176 B.C. In the year following Seleucus was induced to send his son Demetrius as an hostage to Rome, to relieve his own brother Antiochus, who had now been twelve years in that city. Demetrius had departed, and Antiochus was not come; and the absence of the two who stood next the throne afforded Heliodorus an opportunity of conspiring against his master, whom he removed by poison, and himself assumed the government. Antiochus was visiting Athens on his way home, when he heard of this. He immediately applied himself to the old enemy of his father, Eumenes, king of Pergamos* (to whom the Romans had consigned the greater part of the territory in Asia Minor, which they compelled Antiochus the Great to cede) who, with his brother Attalus, was easily induced to assist him against the usurper. They succeeded, and their success placed the brother instead of the son of Seleucus upon the throne of Syria, with the concurrence of the Romans.

Antiochus IV. was scarcely settled on the throne before Jesus, or, by his Greek name, Jason†, repaired to Antioch, and, availing

[Antiochus Epiphanes.]

himself of the penury of the royal treasury, tempted the new king by the offer of four hundred and forty talents of silver to depose the excellent Onias III. from the high-priesthood, and to appoint himself in his place. He also obtained an order that Onias should be summoned to Antioch, and commanded to dwell there. Finding how acceptable money was to the king, Jason offered one hundred and fifty talents more for, and obtained, the privilege of erecting at Jerusalem a gymnasium, or place for such public sports and exercises as were usual among the Greeks, as well as for permission to establish an academy in which Jewish youth might be brought up after the manner of the Greeks; and also the important privilege of making what Jews he pleased free of the city of Antioch. The obvious object of all this was as opposite as possible to that of the Mosaic institutions. It was intended to facilitate the commixture of the Jews with foreigners, and to lessen the dislike with which the Greeks were disposed to regard a people so peculiar and so exclusive. This might have been a good design under general considerations of human policy, but was calculated to be most injurious and fatal as respected the Jews, whose institutions designedly made them a peculiar people, and whatever tended to make them otherwise must needs have been in counteraction of the great principle of their establishment. The effects which resulted from the exertions of Jason, after he had established himself in the high-priesthood, were such as might have been foreseen. The example of a person in his commanding position drew forth and gave full scope to the more lax dispositions which existed among the people, especially among the younger class, who were enchanted with the ease and freedom of the Grecian customs, and weary of the restraints and limitations of their own. Such as these abandoned themselves with all the frenzy of a new excitement, from which all restraint had been withdrawn, to the licence which was offered to them. The exercises of the gymnasium seem to have taken their minds with the force of a fascination. The priests neglected their service in the temple to be present at these spectacles. It is well known that some of these exercises were performed naked; and it is related that many of the Jewish

* The founder of the celebrated library at Pergamos, and the reputed inventor of parchment.

† Most persons of consequence had now two names, one native Hebrew name, used among their own countrymen, and another Greek (as much as possible like the other in sound or meaning) used in their intercourse with the heathen.

competitors found means to efface the marks of circumcision, that they might not be distinguished from other people. In the Greek cities of Asia, in which Jews were settled, this became a common practice among those young men who wished to distinguish themselves in the sports of the gymnasium*. We allude to this as a striking illustration of the extent in which this rite operated in fulfilling its design of separating the Jews from other people. The year after his promotion Jason sent some young men, on whom he had conferred the citizenship of Antioch, to assist at the games which were celebrated at Tyre (in the presence of Antiochus) in honour of Hercules. They were entrusted with a large sum of money, to be expended in sacrifices to that god. But even the least scrupulous of the high-priest's followers were not prepared to go to this extent with him, and instead of obeying their instructions, they presented the money to the Tyrians as a contribution towards the repair of their fleet.

Jason only enjoyed his ill-gotten dignity for three years. His younger brother Onias, or by his Greek name Menelaus, having been sent to Antioch with tribute, took advantage of the opportunity to ingratiate himself with Antiochus, and by offering three hundred talents more than Jason had paid, succeeded in getting himself appointed to the high-priesthood in his room. But he was repulsed in his attempt to assume that high office, and returned to Antioch, where he induced the king to establish him by force, by professing for himself and his associates an entire conformity to the religion of the Greeks. Jason was in consequence expelled by an armed force, and compelled to retire to the land of the Ammonites, leaving the pontificate to his still less scrupulous brother.

Menelaus found that he had over-taxed his resources in the payment he had agreed to make for his promotion, and in consequence of the non-payment, he was summoned to Antioch by the king. Antiochus was absent when he arrived, and he soon learned that there was no hope of his retaining the favour of the king unless the payment was completed. Having exhausted his own coffers as well as credit, he privately sent to his brother Lysimachus (whom he had left as his representative at Jerusalem) to withdraw some of the sacred vessels of gold from the temple, to sell them at Tyre and the neighbouring cities, and send him the amount. This disgraceful affair was not managed with such secrecy but that it came to the knowledge of the deposed high-priest, Onias III., who was still residing at Antioch, much respected by the numerous Jews of that city, before whom he spoke of this sacrilege in such strong language as threw them into such a state of ferment and displeasure as was likely to prove dangerous to Menelaus. He therefore, by bribery, prevailed on Andronicus, the king's deputy at Antioch, to put him to death. Onias, apprised of these intrigues, had taken refuge in the sanctuary of Daphne, near Antioch; but was induced to quit it by the assurances and promises he received from Andronicus, and was barbarously murdered as soon as he had passed the sacred bounds. This atrocious deed raised a terrible outcry among the Jews at Antioch, who hastened to make their complaints to the king on his return to that city. Antiochus, to do him justice, was much affected, and shed tears when he heard them. He promised justice, and performed it; for, after proper investigation, Andronicus was stripped of his purple, and put to death on the very spot where Onias had been murdered. Menelaus, the more guilty of the two, found means to escape the storm which destroyed the agent of his crime. But the sums of money which were necessary to enable him to maintain his credit, obliged his brother Lysimachus to resort to such repeated and unheard-of exactions, violence, and sacrilege, that the people of Jerusalem rose against him, scattered like chaff the three thousand men he had got to defend him, and, when he himself fled to the treasury of the temple, pursued and slew him there.

Antiochus having soon after come to Tyre, the Jewish elders sent three venerable deputies thither to justify this act, and to accuse Menelaus as the author of all the troubles

* To this practice allusions are made by St. Paul, Rom. ii. 25; 1 Cor. vii. 18.

which had happened in Judea and Antioch. The case which they made out was so strong, and was heard with so much attention by the king, that Menelaus felt greatly alarmed for the result. He therefore applied himself to the king's favourite, Ptolemy Macron, and promised him so large a sum, that he was induced to watch the inconstant temper of the king, and availed himself of an opportunity of getting him not only to absolve Menelaus, but to condemn the three Jewish deputies to death. This most unjust and horrid sentence was immediately executed. This terrible crime shocked the whole nation, and was abhorrent even to foreigners, for the Tyrians ventured to express their sense of the wrong, by giving an honourable burial to the murdered men. The ultimate effect was to make Antiochus himself a sharer in the aversion with which Menelaus was regarded by the nation; but at the same time the paramount influence of that guilty person with the king seemed to be so clearly manifested, that all further notion of resisting his authority was abandoned, and he was enabled to resume his station at Jerusalem. This was greatly facilitated by the presence of the king himself with a powerful army in the country, for which circumstance we must now proceed to account.

It will be remembered that the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Epiphanes, had been married to Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus the Great, and sister of the present Antiochus. Ptolemy was taken off by poison in 181 B.C., after a profligate and troubled reign of twenty-four years. He left three children, Ptolemy Philometor, Ptolemy Physcon, and Cleopatra, who was successively married to her two brothers.

Ptolemy VI., surnamed Philometor ('mother-loving'), was but a child at the death of his father, and the government was conducted with ability by his mother Cleopatra. But she died in 173 B.C., on which the regency devolved on Eulæus the eunuch, and Lennæus, the prime minister, the tutors of the young prince. They immediately advanced a claim to the possession of Cœle-Syria and Palestine, on the ground that they had been secured to Ptolemy Lagus by the partition treaty of 301 B.C., and that they had again been given by Antiochus the Great in dowry with his daughter Cleopatra on her becoming queen of Egypt. Antiochus refused to listen to such demands; and both parties sent deputies to Rome to argue their respective claims before the senate.

[Ptolemy Philometor.]

When Philometor had completed his fourteenth year, he was solemnly invested with the government, on which occasion embassies of congratulation were sent from all the neighbouring nations. Apollonius, the ambassador of Antiochus, was instructed to take the opportunity of sounding the dispositions of the Egyptian court; and when this person informed Antiochus that he was viewed as an enemy by the Egyptians, he immediately proceeded to Joppa, to survey his frontiers towards Egypt, and to put them in a state of defence. On this occasion he paid a visit to Jerusalem. The city was illuminated, and the king was received by Jason (who was then high-priest) with every demonstration of respect. Afterwards he returned to Antioch through Phœnicia.

Having completed his preparations for war, Antiochus, in 171 B.C., led his army along the coast of Palestine, and gave the Egyptians a signal overthrow at Pelusium. He then left garrisons on the frontier, and withdrew into winter-quarters at Tyre. It was during his stay there that the deputies arrived to complain of Menelaus, and were put to death, as just related. In the spring of the next year (170 B.C.) Antiochus undertook a second expedition against the Egyptians, and attacked them by sea and land. He defeated them on the frontiers, and took Pelusium. After his victory he might have cut the Egyptian army in pieces, but he behaved with such humanity as gained him great favour with the Egyptians. At length all surrendered to him voluntarily; and with a small body

of troops he overran all the country except Alexandria, and obtained possession of the person of the young king, whom he treated with apparent consideration and regard.

While Antiochus was thus employed, a rumour of his death before Alexandria reached Palestine, on which the deposed high-priest, Jason, quitted the land of the Ammonites, and with a party, assisted by friends within, surprised Jerusalem, massacred the citizens, drove his brother Menelaus into the castle, and possessed himself of the principality. But he was speedily compelled to quit the city and country, at the news that Antiochus was alive, and marching with a powerful army against Jerusalem. After wandering from one place to another, a fugitive and a vagabond, Jason at last perished miserably, a refugee in the strange land of Lacedæmonia. The news of this movement had been reported to Antiochus with such exaggeration as led him to conclude that Judea had revolted; and being further provoked by hearing that the Jews had made public rejoicings at the news of his death, he marched in great wrath from Egypt, took Jerusalem by assault, destroyed eighty thousand persons, plundered the temple of all its treasures, vessels, and golden ornaments, and carried away one thousand eight hundred talents to Antioch.

P. Philometor being now actually under the power of Antiochus, the people of Alexandria proclaimed his brother king under the name of P. Euergetes II.; but who was

[P. Physcon.]

afterwards nick-named Physcon ['big-belly'] on account of his corpulency. This afforded Antiochus a pretext for returning the next year (169 B.C.) to Egypt with the declared intention of supporting P. Philometor in the throne, but with the real purpose of bringing the whole country under his power. At the end, however, perceiving that the conquest of Alexandria would be an undertaking of great difficulty, he withdrew to Memphis, and affected to deliver up the kingdom to Philometor, and returned to Antioch. But as he retained in his own hands Pelusium, the key of the kingdom on the side of Syria, his ulterior designs were transparent to Philometor, who therefore made an agreement with Physcon that they should share the government between them and resist Antiochus with their united power, and also that a joint embassy should be sent to Rome to implore the protection of the Republic against their uncle.

This brought on a fourth invasion of Egypt by Antiochus (168 B.C.), who now threw off the mask he had hitherto chosen to wear, and declared himself the enemy of both the brother kings. He took possession of all the country as far as Alexandria, and then advanced towards that city. He was within four miles thereof, when he was met at Eleusis, by the ambassadors which the Roman republic had sent to adjust these differences. And this they did in the usual summary manner of that arrogant people. At the head of the ambassadors was Popilius Lænas, whom Antiochus had known during his thirteen years' residence at Rome. Rejoiced to see him, Antiochus stretched forth his arms to embrace him. But the Roman sternly repelled the salute, demanding first to receive an answer to the written orders of the senate, which he delivered. The king intimated that he would confer on the matter with his friends, and acquaint the ambassadors with the result, on which Popilius drew with his staff a circle around the king on the sand, and said, "I require your answer before you quit this circle." The king was confounded; but after a moment of rapid and condensed deliberation, he bowed his proud head, and said, falteringly, "I will obey the senate!" On which Popilius, who had hitherto seen only the *king* of Syria, recognised the *friend*, and extended to him his hand. Perhaps this conduct in either party would not have occurred the year, or even the month before; but the Romans had just concluded their war with Perseus, and made Macedonia a Roman province, and the am-

bassadors had waited at Delos to learn the issue of this war before they sailed for Egypt.

Antiochus obeyed the senate by immediately withdrawing his forces from Egypt. On his way homeward he marched along the coast of Palestine, and he despatched Apollonius, his general, with twenty-two thousand men to vent his mortification and fury upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which, as well as the rest of the province, had for two years been groaning under the tyranny and rapacity of Philip, the Phrygian governor, "more barbarous than his master," and of Menelaus the apostate high-priest, "worse than all the rest." Apollonius came to Jerusalem, and as his men remained quiet, and he was himself known as the collector of the tribute in Palestine, and as such usually attended by an armed force, his hostile intentions were not suspected by the Jews. All things remained quiet until the Sabbath, on which day, it was known, the Jews of that age would not fight even in self-defence. The soldiers were then let loose, and scoured the streets, slaughtering all they met, who suffered themselves meekly to be slain, none being found who attempted to stand on their defence. The women and children were spared, to be sold for slaves. All the streets of Jerusalem, and the courts of the temple, flowed with blood; the houses were pillaged, and the city wall thrown down. Apollonius then demolished all the buildings near Mount Zion, and with the materials strengthened the fortifications of the citadel, which he furnished with a garrison, and held under his own command. This castle was so situated as to give the garrison complete command of the temple; and the remains of the people would no longer visit the sanctuary, or the priests perform the public services of religion. Accordingly, in the month of June, 167 B.C., the daily sacrifice ceased, and Jerusalem was soon completely deserted, as the surviving inhabitants fled to the cities of the neighbouring Gentiles.

An edict was now issued at Antioch, and proclaimed in all the provinces of Syria, commanding the inhabitants of the whole empire to worship the gods of the king, and to acknowledge no religion but his, with the declared object "that all should become one people." Antiochus was unquestionably a madman. This is not doubted by any one who has studied *the whole* of his history, which it has been no part of our duty to relate; and it is surely not very necessary to analyse the interior motives of a madman's acts. Hales fancies that "this *general persecution* seems to have been raised by Antiochus, not from any regard to his own religion, but from a regular plan and deep-laid scheme of plundering the temples throughout his dominions, after he had suppressed their worship. For the temples were not only enriched by the offerings of the votaries, but from their sanctity were the great banks of deposit, and the grand magazines of commerce." But there was no *general* persecution, although the edict was general in its terms. The cities containing the wealthiest temples already worshipped the gods of Greece; and it must have been known, as proved to be the fact, that none of the other pagan nations would make much difficulty in complying with the royal edict. It must have been known, in fact, that none but the Jews were likely to oppose themselves to the operation of this decree; and we are, therefore, not disposed to look for any deeper cause than the insane abhorrence which Antiochus had conceived against that people, and which he could not safely manifest without bringing them into a condition of apparent contumacy, which might, *in some degree*, excuse, in the eyes of the heathen, his contemplated severities against them.

The pagans generally, as we have intimated, found no difficulty in complying with the royal edict. The Samaritans, who were anxious to claim a Jewish origin in the time of Alexander, now wrote to Antiochus to inform him that they were Sidonians, and offered to dedicate their temple on Mount Gerizim to Jupiter Xenius, "the defender of strangers." Even many Jews submitted to the edict for fear of punishment, and a still greater number, long attached to the customs of the Greeks, were glad to avail themselves of the apparent compulsions under which

they were now placed. But the better part of the people fled, and kept themselves concealed. An old man of the name of Athenæus was sent to Jerusalem to instruct the Jews in the Greek religion, and to compel the observance of its rites. He dedicated the temple to Jupiter Olympius, and on the altar of Jehovah he placed a smaller altar to be used in sacrificing to the heathen god. This new altar, built by order of the desolater, Antiochus, is what Daniel alludes to when he speaks of the "abomination that maketh desolate,"* or "abomination of desolation," as Jahn prefers reading it. This altar was set up on the fifteenth day of the month Cisleu (November–December), and the heathen sacrifices were commenced on the twenty-fifth of the same month. Circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, and every peculiar observance of the law, was made a capital offence; and all the copies of the law which could be found were taken away, defaced, torn in pieces, and burned. The reading of it was forbidden; and it is said to have been at this time that the Jews first took to the public reading in the synagogues, of the other books of Scripture, as substitutes for the interdicted Pentateuch, which usage they afterwards retained, when the reading of the law was restored. Groves were consecrated, and idolatrous altars erected in every city, and the citizens were required to offer sacrifices to the gods, and to eat swine's flesh every month on the birth-day of the king; and on the feast of Bacchus the Jews were compelled to join in the celebration, and to walk in procession crowned with ivy. Instant death was the penalty of refusal. Among other instances of cruel punishment at Jerusalem two women, with their infant children, whom they had circumcised with their own hands, were thrown from the battlements on the south side of the temple, into the deep vale below. Officers were sent into all the towns, attended by bands of soldiers, to enforce obedience to the royal edict.

It seems that ultimately Antiochus came into Palestine to observe that his orders had been duly executed; and the history relates that he commanded and superintended the most horrible tortures of the recusants:—particular mention is made of the martyrdom of Eleazar, in his ninetieth year, for refusing to eat swine's flesh*; and of the heroic matron and her seven sons, who nobly set the royal madman at defiance, and professed their belief that "The King of the World would raise up to everlasting life those who died for his laws;" and threatening their tormentor that "he should have no resurrection to life, but receive the just punishment of his pride through the judgment of God." Never before were the Jews exposed to so furious a persecution; indeed it is the first time in which they can be said to have been persecuted on account of their religion. It was undoubtedly made instrumental in the then great mission of the Jews in calling the attention of the heathen to the great principles of doctrine of which they had been the special conservators. The mere fact of this conspicuous persecution for opinion, which was a new thing to the heathen, and still more the historical results of this persecution, were calculated to draw the attention of every reflecting mind among the heathen to those religious peculiarities, on behalf of which such numbers of the Jewish people were willing to peril their lives.

The persecution had lasted about six months, when God raised up a deliverer for a people whom he had not yet abandoned, in the noble family of the Asamoneans. MATTATHIAS was the son of John, the son of Simon, the son of *Asamoneus*, from whom the family took its name. He was a priest of the course of Jehoiarib, the first of the twenty-four courses appointed by David†, descended from Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the elder branch of the family of Aaron‡. He had five sons, whose names were JOHANAN (John), SIMON, JUDAS, ELEAZAR, and JONATHAN. He was one of the principal inhabitants of Modin, a town near the seashore, about a mile from Joppa (Jaffa), and four miles from Lydda or Diospolis. To this city a royal officer named Apelles was sent

* Dan. x.

* 2 Macc. vi. 18—31.

† 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. ‡ 1 Macc. ii. 55.

to enforce the edict. With many fair promises, he endeavoured to induce Mattathias, as a leading man in the place, to set the example of sacrificing to the idol. But the undaunted priest repelled his offers with indignation and abhorrence, and with a loud voice, in the hearing of the whole assembly, proclaimed his refusal to sacrifice. At this juncture a certain Jew passed towards the altar with the intention of sacrificing, when Mattathias, in obedience to the law, struck him down with his own hand, as a rebel against Jehovah. This was the earnest-blood of the great war which followed. Kindled by his own act, the zealous priest and his sons, assisted by the citizens, whom their daring act emboldened, rushed upon the commissioner and his retinue, slew them on the spot, and tore down the idolatrous altar. Alive to the consequences of this deed, Mattathias proclaimed through the city, "Whosoever is zealous for the law, and a maintainer of the covenant, let him follow me!" Thus he and his sons fled to the mountains of Judea. They were only *ten* in number at first, but were soon joined by many Jews who were determined to maintain the religion of their fathers.

These conscientious persons were disposed to construe the obligations of the law all the more rigidly and literally, out of opposition to the loose principles of those who had joined the Greeks—it being the tendency of all great struggles to produce extreme parties. They hence held it to be imperative to abstain from the use of arms on the Sabbath day. In consequence of this a thousand persons, who had taken refuge in a large cave not far from Jerusalem, allowed themselves to be slaughtered on that day without the least resistance. This event opened the eyes of Mattathias and his adherents; who, after mature deliberation, determined that it was not only lawful, but their duty, to stand on their defence on the Sabbath day; although they still thought themselves bound from voluntarily becoming on that day the assailants. They took every means of making this resolution known throughout the country, so that from that time no scruples on the subject were entertained.

Meanwhile the party of Mattathias went on steadily increasing, until it amounted to a considerable body of men, who were prepared to hazard everything in defence of their religion. This ardour could not long be restrained, and Mattathias, emerging from his concealment, went with them throughout the Jewish cities, and everywhere demolished the idolatrous altars, circumcised the children, slew the apostate Jews and the officers appointed to execute the decree of Antiochus, recovered many of the copies of the law which the oppressors had taken away, and gained several important advantages over the enemy. While engaged in these expeditions the heroic priest died, in the year 167 B.C. Before his death he appointed his third and bravest son, Judas, to be military leader; associating with him Simon, his second and most prudent son, as counsellor. Judas is supposed to have derived his celebrated surname of *Maccabeus* from a cabalistic word formed of M. C. B. I., the initial letters of the Hebrew text *Mi Chamoka Baalim Jehovah*, "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah!" (Exod. vi. 11), which letters *might* have been displayed on his sacred standard: like the S. P. Q. R. for *Senatus populus que Romanus* on the Roman ensigns.

The noble war for the rights of opinion commenced by Mattathias was carried on for twenty-six years by his illustrious sons—counting from the first stroke at Modin—with five successive kings of Syria. Within this period Judas and his brothers established the independence of their country and the aggrandisement of their family, after destroying above two hundred thousand of the best troops of the Syrian kings. "Such a triumph of a petty province over a great empire is hardly to be paralleled in the annals of history."*

The first enterprise of Judas, and his comparatively small but resolute band, was against Apollonius, whose barbarous exploits at Jerusalem have lately been recorded. He was at the head of a large army, but was defeated and slain by Judas, who took his

* Hales, ii. 551.

sword, with which he afterwards fought all his life long.

The next exploit of Judas was the defeat of Seron, a Syrian general, with a large host of Græcising Jews and apostate Samaritans. The small force with which he achieved this victory was encouraged by the hero in the words of Jonathan, the son of Saul, "With the God of Heaven it is all one to deliver with a great multitude or a small company:" adding the emphatic words, "*We fight for our lives and our laws.*" This battle was fought near Betheron.

Antiochus was filled with rage and indignation at these successes of an adversary who seemed so contemptible, but whose fame had now spread into all the neighbouring nations. He formed large plans of vengeance, but finding these checked by the exhausted state of his treasury—for he had squandered wealth like a madman, as he was—he resolved to proceed into the eastern provinces to recruit his finances. His son, the heir of his crown, then about seven years old, he committed to the care of Lysias, "a nobleman, and one of the blood-royal," and appointed him regent of all the western provinces, from the Euphrates to Egypt, and commissioned him to raise and march an army to extirpate the Jews, and to plant a foreign colony in their room, 166 B.C.

The next year Lysias was able to send a large army of forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse into Judea, under the command of Nicanor and Gorgias. So confident were they of victory that Nicanor proclaimed a sale of the captive Jews beforehand, at the rate of ninety for a talent, or about two pounds sterling a head. This drew a crowd of merchants from the coast to the Syrian camp at Emmaus, near Jerusalem, to make a cheap purchase of slaves. This was *not* a peculiar circumstance: for it was then usual (according to Polybius) for the march of armies to be attended by slave-dealers. Under these alarming circumstances Judas and his party assembled at Mizpeh—that ancient place of concourse—where they fasted and prayed; after which Judas, in obedience to the law, dismissed all such of his men as had in the course of the preceding year built houses, betrothed wives, or were planting vineyards, or were fearful; and this strong act of faith reduced his small army from six thousand to three thousand men.

The Syrian generals deemed it superfluous to employ their large force against so small a body. Gorgias, therefore, with a chosen army of five thousand foot and one thousand horse, marched by night to surprise the army of Judas. But that vigilant commander was apprised of the design, and determined to take advantage of the separation of the two generals. He marched therefore early in the evening, and fell by night upon the camp of Nicanor. Not the least expectation of an attack being entertained, the whole camp was thrown into confusion, and the soldiers fled. Three thousand Syrians were slain, and many soldiers and slave-dealers made prisoners. Early in the morning Gorgias, returning from his abortive march to Mizpeh, beheld the Syrian camp in flames, which threw his soldiers into such a panic that they betook themselves to instant flight; but were pressed upon so vigorously by the conquering Jews, that in all they destroyed that day nine thousand of their enemies, and wounded many more. Nicanor escaped in the disguise of a slave to Antioch, declaring his conviction that a mighty God fought for the Jews. In the camp of the Syrians the latter found great quantities of gold and silver, including the money which the slave-dealers had brought to purchase their persons. This victory was celebrated by a feast of thanksgiving.

On the news of this defeat, the regent Lysias assembled a larger army of sixty thousand choice infantry and five thousand horse, and marched himself at their head, to invade Judea in the south. He entered *Idumea*, which name must be understood as distinguishing the more modern territory of the Edomites, from their older and more southern territory of Edom, in Mount Seir, which the Nabathæans now occupied.—Idumea was then confined to the region west and south-west of the Asphaltic Lake, which had in former times belonged to the tribes of Simeon and Judah. But after the

Captivity it had been occupied by Edomites from Arabia Petræa, the ancient Edom, who made Hebron their capital, and rebuilt, on their northern frontier, the strong fortress of Bethsur, or Bethsura, which had been originally built by Rehoboam*. At this last-named very advantageous post, Lysias encamped, and was there set upon by the dauntless Judas, who, with only ten thousand men, gained a most important victory, slaying five thousand men on the spot, and putting the rest to flight. Observing that the Jews fought like men who were determined to conquer or die, Lysias did not venture to renew the engagement, and indeed his soldiers were so disheartened that he was soon obliged to return to Antioch, and there issue orders that recruits for a new expedition should be raised in distant countries, 165 B.C.

This victory made Judas master of Judea; and he determined to return to Jerusalem, to repair and beautify the temple, which was then deserted and dilapidated. In the neglected courts of the Lord's house shrubs were growing "as in the forest or on the mountain." The whole host cast ashes on their heads, and cried towards heaven, when they beheld the desolation of that holy place. The work of restoration was commenced with ardour; new utensils were provided for the sacred services; the old altar, having been defiled by idolatrous sacrifices, was taken away, and a new one erected in its place; and the sacrifices were recommenced precisely three years after the temple had been dedicated to Jupiter Olympius. A feast of eight days celebrated this new dedication, and an annual festival was instituted in honour of the event.

The castle on Mount Zion soon, however, proved a serious annoyance to the people, as it was still in the hands of the Syrians, who lost no opportunity of disturbing the services of the temple. The army of Judas was too small to allow him to blockade the castle, but he fortified the temple-mount against their aggressions with high walls and towers. He also strengthened the important fortress of Bethsura, to protect the frontier towards Idumea, as it lay about midway between Jerusalem and Hebron.

When Antiochus Epiphanes received intelligence of the success of the Jewish arms and the defeat of the Syrian hosts, he was at Elymais in Persia, detained by an insurrection occasioned by his plundering the celebrated temple in which his father Antiochus the Great had lost his life. Transported with ungovernable passion at the news, he hastened his homeward march to Antioch, devoting the Jewish nation to utter destruction. But, while his mouth uttered the deep curses and fell purposes of his heart, he was smitten with sore and remediless torments in his inner parts. Yet on he went, until he fell from his chariot, and suffered much from the fall. He was then carried on a litter, but his disease acquired such a loathsome character that his person became an abhorrence to himself and to all who had occasion to be near him. In a disease so timed and so peculiar, the proud monarch was led to perceive the hand of God, and to acknowledge that his barbarities and sacrileges were justly punished by the torments which he endured and by the death which lay before him. He died early in the year 164 B.C., and in him perished a man whose wild extravagances, dissolute and undignified character, savage cruelties, and capricious alternations of temper, abundantly justified the nickname of Epimanes ['madman'] by which in his latter years his assumed title of Epiphanes ['illustrious'] was ridiculed.

Antiochus V., surnamed Eupator ['well-fathered'], then a child nine years of age, was set up for king by his guardian Lysias,

[Antiochus (V.) Eupator.]

and his succession received the important sanction of the Romans; for although De-

* 2 Chron. xi. 7.

metrius (the son of Seleucus Philopator), still an hostage at Rome, and then twenty-three years of age, failed not to urge his claims upon the attention of the senate, that sage body decided that it was more for the interests of Rome that a minor should occupy the throne of Syria, than the ardent and able Demetrius.

In the year 164 B.C. the war against the Maccabees was renewed by the regent Lysias. He invaded Judea with an army of eighty thousand foot, eighty elephants, and a large body of cavalry. He laid siege to Bethsura, but was repulsed by Judas, with the loss of eleven thousand foot, and one thousand six hundred horse, and his whole army was broken up. This defeat convinced Lysias that the Jews could not be overcome, because of the Almightiness of the God by whom they were helped. He therefore offered them peace, on the condition of their being loyal to the state; on their acceptance of which, he issued a decree in the name of the king, which allowed them the free exercise of their own customs and worship, and permitted them to live according to their own laws. The apostate high-priest Menelaus, who had been all this while with the Syrians, and had exerted himself in promoting this peace, was now sent back to the Jews to be reinstated in his pontificate. It is of some importance to note that the Roman ambassadors at the Syrian court used their efficient aid in obtaining this treaty for the Jews.

The peace thus afforded was of no long continuance: for although, formally, the war with the kingdom had ceased, the governors of the Syrian provinces were not backward in giving the Jews all the molestation in their power, and in encouraging such of the neighbouring nations as were from old or new enmities disposed to disturb them—such as the Joppites, the Jamnites, the Arabians, and the Idumeans, all of whom were successively reduced by Judas, after a bloody warfare, the particulars of which are recorded in 2 Macc. x. 14—38; xi. 1—38.

All this time the citadel on Mount Zion, garrisoned by Syrians and renegade Jews, continued to prove a great annoyance to the temple worship, which at last proved so intolerable, that Judas was induced to lay siege to it, after his return from the defeat of Gorgias the governor of Idumea. But some of the besieged, forcing their way through in a sally, hastened to the court at Antioch, and complained of the continued hostility of the Jews to the Syrian government, as evinced by this attempt upon the Syrian garrison; and, by dwelling on this and other matters, contrived to stir up Lysias to undertake a new war against them. The Syrian army which was raised for this war in 163 B.C. consisted of one hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, thirty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes—a prodigious force in that age, when, on account of the extravagant wages which soldiers received, it was difficult to keep more than eighty thousand men in the field. The young king was present in the camp, but of course Lysias was the actual commander. The Jews did not venture to attack the royal army in the open field. But while the Syrians laid siege to Bethsura, Judas fell upon them in the night, slew four thousand of them before they well knew who was among them, and drew off safely by break of day. The day after, a battle took place, in which the Syrians lost six hundred men; but Judas, fearing to be surrounded by the superior numbers of the enemy, thought proper to retire to Jerusalem, the fortifications of which he now strengthened and put in a state of defence. In this battle Judas lost his brother Eleazer. That valiant man perceiving one of the elephants more splendidly caparisoned than the others, mistakenly supposed it to be that of the king, and fought his way to it, got under it, stabbed it in the belly, and was crushed to death by the fall of the huge beast upon him.

It being a sabbatic year of rest to the land, Bethsura soon after surrendered for lack of provisions; and Jerusalem, which was next besieged, must have shared the same fate, and all the advantages which had been gained appeared now to be on the point of being lost for ever; when providentially

the young king and his guardian were recalled by a civil war at home, commenced by Philip, who had been appointed regent by Antiochus Epiphanes before his death, to the exclusion of Lysias, whose ill success in the former war with the Jews had been highly displeasing to him. When this intelligence reached the camp, the king and council hastily concluded a peace with the Jews on the former terms—that they should be allowed to live according to their own laws. The siege was then broken up, but the treaty was violated by the Syrians in the demolition of the strong walls of the mount on which the temple stood. The royal army was then marched against Philip, who had gotten possession of Antioch, the metropolis, but who was defeated and slain.

Now at last the traitor and apostate Menelaus met the fate he had long deserved. At the approach of the Syrian army he had abandoned his countrymen, and had stimulated the operations against them by his advice and counsel, in the secret hope of being made governor of the province, if Judas and his party were destroyed. But the intended mischief recoiled on his own wicked head. On the conclusion of the peace, he was viewed by the king and regent as the author of all these unhappy wars, and was sentenced to be suffocated in the ash-tower at Berea*; while the office to which he aspired was given to Judas himself, who was appointed to be chief governor "from Ptolemais unto the Gerrhenians."

In the room of Menelaus, Jachimus or Alcimus was nominated to the high-priesthood, to the exclusion of the rightful claimant, Onias, the son of that Onias who had been slain at Antioch at the instigation of Menelaus. Upon this disappointment, Onias retired in disgust to Egypt, where his military and political talents procured him high favour from Ptolemy Philometor, and he was ultimately empowered to build a temple and establish a priesthood, for the numerous Jews of Egypt and Cyrene, at Heliopolis; and which subsisted nearly as long as that of Jerusalem, both being destroyed in the reign of Vespasian. There can be no question of the irregularity of this establishment; and although Onias justified it to the Jews by reference to the text Isa. xix. 18, 19, the temple at Jerusalem was always held in much superior estimation by the Jews even of Egypt, who frequently repaired thither to worship.

* This punishment was borrowed by the Syrian-Greeks from the Persians. A place was enclosed with high walls and filled with ashes. A piece of timber was made to project over the ashes, and on this the criminal was placed. He was liberally supplied with meat and drink, until overcome with sleep, he fell into the deceitful heap, and died an easy death. Only criminals of high rank were thus punished, it being considered a sort of privileged death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASAMONEAN PRINCES.

With the promotion of Judas Maccabeus to be chief governor of Judea, the rule of the Asamonean dynasty may be conveniently taken to commence, and the period which that rule embraces may be suitably introduced in a new chapter.

Alcimus, the new high-priest, did not long enjoy his dignity, for his profligacy, and his attempts to revive the heathenish rites, so offended the Jews, that they expelled him.

We have already noticed the refusal of the Roman senate to support the claim of Demetrius to the crown of Syria, or to allow him to depart for that country. Subsequently, acting by the advice of his friend Polybius, the historian, he made his escape from Rome, and landed with a few men, only eight friends and their servants, at Tripolis in Phœnicia. Here he had the art to make it believed that his wild enterprise

was sanctioned by the Romans; under which persuasion he was joined by several of his adherents, with whom he advanced towards Antioch. Here the army declared for him, and secured the persons of Antiochus Eupator and Lysias, and in proof of their sincerity, brought them to Demetrius; but he said, "Let me not see their face!" on which hint they were slain by the soldiers, 162 B.C.

In the preceding year one of the Roman ambassadors at the court of A. Eupator had been slain, while enforcing the treaty with

[Demetrius Soter.]

Antiochus the Great, by destroying all the elephants, and all but twelve of the ships of war. Demetrius, anxious to have his claims recognised by Rome, sent the murderer thither, together with the present of a crown of gold. The present was accepted by the senate; but they dismissed the murderer, resolving to take some future occasion of making the whole Syrian empire responsible for the act.

When Demetrius was established on the throne of Syria, the apostate Jews, with Alcimus at their head, gathered around him, and filled his ears with reports and insinuations injurious to Judas and the party of which he was the leader. As people naturally listen with pleasure to those who express conformity of views, it is not wonderful that these traitors gained the attention of the king, who could as yet know but little of the real state of affairs in his kingdom. He re-appointed Alcimus as high-priest, and sent a considerable military force, under the command of Bacchides, governor of Mesopotamia, to reinstate him, and to take vengeance upon those whom he had represented as equally the enemies of himself and the king. As Bacchides accompanied by the high-priest, entered the country with professions of peace, many Jews, relying thereon, put themselves in his power, and were treacherously slain. After this Bacchides reinstated Alcimus; and intrusting the province to his charge, and leaving a force that seemed sufficient to support him, he returned to the king. Judas, who had not appeared in the field against Bacchides, came forward after he withdrew; and Alcimus, unable to offer any effectual resistance, again repaired with his complaints to the king. On this Demetrius, resolving on the utter destruction of the Maccabees, sent a large army into Judea, under the command of the same Nicanor whom Judas had defeated five years before. At first he endeavoured to entrap the Jewish chief with friendly professions, but finding Judas too wary to be thus caught, hostilities commenced, and in a battle fought at Capharsalama, Nicanor was defeated with the loss of fifty thousand men. He was then forced to seek refuge in the castle of Mount Zion, until the reinforcements, for which he sent, should arrive from Syria. These were promptly supplied, and then he hazarded another battle, in which he was himself slain, and his army cut in pieces, 160 B.C.

Now Judas, having heard of the already extensive conquests of the Romans, and having become sensible of the great controlling power which they exercised in the affairs of western Asia and of Egypt, took the opportunity of the respite which this victory procured, to send an embassy to Rome, to solicit an alliance with that great people, and therewith protection from the Syrian government. It was part of the systematic plan of subjugation practised by that most politic body, the Roman senate, to grant liberty to those who were under foreign dominion, that they might detach them from their rulers, and afterwards enslave them when fit opportunity offered*. The Jewish ambassadors were therefore very

* This is the drift of Justin's remark with reference to this very transaction:—"A Demetrio cum defecissent Judæi, amicitiâ Romanorum petitâ, primi omnium ex Orientalibus libertatem receperunt: facile tunc Romanis de alieno largientibus." Lib. xxxvi. cap. 3.

graciously received; an offensive and defensive alliance was readily concluded with the Jews; and a letter was immediately after written to Demetrius, commanding him to desist from persecuting them, and threatening him with war if he persisted. But before the ambassadors returned, or this letter had been received, Judas had fallen in a furious conflict with Bacchides, whom (with Alcimus) the king had sent to avenge the defeat of Nicanor and his host. With only eight hundred men, the rest having deserted him, Judas charged the Syrians, defeated their right wing and pursued them to Azotus: but the left wing, being unbroken, pursued him closely in turn; and after a most obstinate engagement the greatest of the later Jewish heroes lay dead upon the field. This was not far from Modin, his native town; and his brothers Simon and Jonathan, having concluded a truce, were enabled to deposit his remains in the family sepulchre at that place.

The death of Judas restored the ascendancy to the apostate Jews, and was followed by a merciless persecution of his adherents. They were thus made strongly sensible of the want of a head, and therefore they elected JONATHAN, the valiant younger brother of Judas, to be their chief and leader. He led them into the wilderness of Tekoah, and encamped at the cistern of Aspher. After some skirmishes with the Arabs in that quarter, Jonathan deemed it advisable to send the wives and children, and the most valuable property of his party, to the safe keeping of the friendly Nabathæans of Mount Seir, under a convoy commanded by his brother John. This party was attacked on the way and plundered by the Arabs, and John himself was killed. For this, Jonathan soon after took a severe revenge upon the bridal procession at the marriage of one of the princesses of this same tribe, which he attacked, and slew the greater part, and took their spoils.

After this, Jonathan, the more effectually to secure himself from his enemies, withdrew into the marshes formed by the overflowings of the Jordan, access to which was very difficult. Bacchides, however, made an attack on the Sabbath-day, upon the pass leading to the camp, and carried it by storm. The Jews defended themselves with great valour; but, being oppressed by numbers, they leaped into the overflowing Jordan and swam to the other side, whither the enemy did not venture to pursue them.

It was not without difficulty that Jonathan roused his adherents to the exertions which they made on this occasion. In fact there are several indications, at and before this time, that the people were becoming tired of this long struggle for their religion and liberties, and disposed to submit to circumstances, for the sake of the quiet of which they had been so many years deprived. Besides, by this time the original character of the war, as one of resistance against religious persecution, had somewhat changed. There was more of politics mixed in it; and with that change, the ardour of the orthodox Jews appears to have abated. The Syrian government had also become much more mild since the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and under favouring circumstances, it might have been expected that the Jews would without difficulty have obtained what they sought. It was probably the knowledge of this, as well as from the consciousness that the breach was not likely to be healed by continued warfare, that latterly produced so great a reluctance to support the Maccabees, and so strong a disposition to submit to the Syrians. We may thus account not only for the circumstance which occasions this remark, but for the readiness of some of the best supporters of the Maccabees to listen to the fair promises of the Syrian generals; for the desertion of Judas, before his last action, by the great body of his adherents; and for his comparative inaction on several recent occasions. To the operation of these circumstances we are also disposed to refer the anxiety of Judas to conclude a treaty with the Romans. For this step he has been blamed by some persons, who appear to have inadequately considered the circumstances. It is not clear to us that if Judas had been aware that the step he took was likely to lead to the future subjection of the

country to the Romans, he would have been deterred from seeking their alliance. He did *not* fight for national independence, which was a moral impossibility, but for liberty of conscience. If *that* had been conceded by the Syrian kings, the Jews would readily have returned to their political subjection, and were indeed anxious to do so. If therefore Judas had known the ultimate contingency of subjection to the Romans instead of the Syrians, there was nothing in that to deter him, if he felt that the Romans were likely to be more tolerant of the religious peculiarities of his nation. It is quite true that by the skilful use of circumstances which ultimately arose, the Jews were enabled to establish a modified independence—which independence the Romans destroyed. But these circumstances were not foreseen in the time of Judas, and independence was not among the objects originally contemplated. It is only in forgetfulness of those facts that any one can impute blame to Judas for the measure which he took—which measure, indeed, we cannot trace to have had any grave effect upon ultimate results. Whether the Jews had offered themselves to the notice of the Romans at this time or not, they certainly could not long have escaped the attention of that people, nor, unless events had taken an entirely different course to that which they actually took, could their subjection to the Roman yoke have been long postponed.

From the Jordan, Bacchides returned to Jerusalem, and was employed for some time in strengthening the fortresses of Judea, particularly the citadel at Jerusalem and the important fortresses of Gazara. The sons of some of the principal persons among the Jews he took and detained in the citadel as hostages for the good conduct of their friends. But in the same year Alcimus was seized with a kind of cramp, and died in much agony, while giving orders for the demolition of the wall which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites, so as to give the former free access to the privileged part of the temple; and Bacchides having nothing to detain him in Judea, after the death of the man on whose account the war was undertaken, withdrew from the country, and allowed the Jews two years of repose. To what extent this may have been due to the interposition of the Romans, we have no means of knowing; but the results of the application to the senate must by this time have been known both at Antioch and in Judea. Probably the death of Judas, before the return of his ambassadors, went far to neutralise the immediate effects which might have been expected from this treaty.

This tranquillity was not favourable to the designs of the Græcising Jews, who laid a plot to surprise and seize Jonathan and his adherents, all in one night, throughout the land, and prevailed on Bacchides to return with the force under his command to give effect to their design (158 B.C.). A timely discovery of the plot enabled Jonathan to damp the ardour of the conspirators by putting to death fifty of the principal of them. Not, however, feeling himself in a condition to oppose Bacchides in the field, Jonathan, with his friends and his brother Simon, withdrew to the wilderness, where they so strongly repaired the dilapidated fortress of Bethbasi, that they were enabled to maintain a long siege against Bacchides, and at length to defeat him. This affair wonderfully enlightened the Syrian general, who now perceived that he had been but the tool of a faction; and, in his resentment, he put to death several of the persons who had the most actively stimulated his enterprise. At this juncture Jonathan sent to him a deputation with proposals of peace, and Bacchides readily acceded to the terms which were offered. The treaty being concluded and sworn to by both parties, an exchange of prisoners took place, and Bacchides withdrew from the land, 156 B.C. Peace being thus happily restored, Jonathan fixed his residence at the strong post of Michmash, six miles north-by-east from Jerusalem, where he governed according to the laws of Moses, and to the extent of his power reformed the public abuses which had sprung up during the past troubles.

About the year 154 B.C., Demetrius Soter retired to a new palace which he had built

near Antioch, and there abandoned himself entirely to luxury and pleasure. All business and all care were refused admission, and consequently all the responsibilities and duties of his high office were utterly neglected. Hence arose great administrative abuses, and these led to discontents, and discontents to conspiracies, which were eagerly fostered by different neighbouring kings, especially by Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt*, from whom the island of Cyprus had been taken by Demetrius. They availed themselves of the services of Heraclides, who had been banished by Demetrius, and who had since lived at Rhodes; and now, at the instigation of these kings, he persuaded a young man of obscure birth, named Balas, to announce himself as the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, and as such lay claim to the throne of Syria. As soon as he had been sufficiently tutored in the part he was to act, he publicly advanced his pretensions, which were acknowledged at once by Ptolemy Philometor, by Ariarathes, king of Cappadocia, and by Attalus, king of Pergamus (153 B.C.). He was then sent to Rome, together with a true daughter of Antiochus; and, although the senate soon detected the imposture, their old grudge against Demetrius, for having taken the throne of Syria without their consent, led them to recognise him, and empower him to raise forces for the recovery of a kingdom in which he could have had no just pretensions to supersede Demetrius (the son of the elder brother), even had his alleged birth been true. Balas now assumed the name of Alexander, and the title of king of Syria. He delayed not to levy troops, and sailed to

* As the transactions in Egypt, since they were last noticed, have not, up to this point, been necessarily involved in the current of our history, we have not allowed them to engage our notice. It may however be briefly indicated in a note, that, after their junction against Antiochus Epiphanes, quarrels arose between the two brother kings, Philometor and Physcon, which the Romans endeavoured to adjust in 162 B.C. by arranging that Philometor should retain Egypt and Cyprus, and that Physcon should reign in Libya and Cyrene. But they soon again were at variance respecting Cyprus, which Physcon wanted, but which Philometor resolved to retain according to the terms of the agreement. Meanwhile, as often happens in such cases, a third party (Demetrius) stepped in, and appropriated to himself the disputed island. Hence the enmity of Philometor to the king of Syria.

[Alexander Balas.]

Ptolemais (previously Accho), now Acre, in Palestine, where he was joined by numbers who had become disaffected to Demetrius. That infatuated person was now fairly roused from his lethargy, and came forth from his disgraceful retreat—but it was too late.

This conjuncture of affairs was highly favourable to the interests of the Jews, as, from the high military character they had now acquired, the rivals vied with each other in the honours and immunities which they offered for the assistance of Jonathan and the Jews. First, Demetrius sent a letter appointing Jonathan his general in Judea, empowering him to levy forces, and promising to release the hostages. When the contents of this letter were made known, the hostages were restored by the garrison of the citadel, and the fortresses throughout the country were given up to him by the Syrian garrisons which Bacchides had left in them. The citadel and Bethsura, indeed, still held out, as they were garrisoned by apostate Jews, who had no other resource. Jonathan now removed from Michmash and fixed his residence at Jerusalem, which he occupied himself in repairing, and in rebuilding those walls of the temple-mount which Antiochus Eupator had cast down.

On the other hand, Balas, acting probably by the advice of Ptolemy Philometor (who was well acquainted with the affairs and interests of the Jews), sent also a letter to Jonathan, in the very commencement of which he styled him "Brother," gave him the title and rank of "Friend of the King," appointed him to the high-priesthood, and sent him a purple robe and diadem, thereby creating him Ethnarch, or Prince of Judea. It was in the seventh month of this same

year (153 B.C.) that Jonathan put on the holy robe of the high-priest, after that high office had been vacant for seven years.

Demetrius did not yet despair of outbidding Balas in this struggle to gain the favour and assistance of Jonathan. The list of the exemptions, immunities, and privileges which he offered is exceedingly curious, as showing the extent and minute ramifications of the previous exactions of the Syrian government; and we have therefore introduced it entire in a note below*.

* "King Demetrius unto the people of the Jews sendeth greeting. Whereas ye have kept covenant with us, and continued in our friendship, not joining yourselves with our enemies, we have heard thereof, and are glad. Wherefore now continue ye still to be faithful unto us, and we will well recompense you for the things ye do in our behalf, and will grant you many immunities, and give you rewards. And now do I free you, and for your sake I release all the Jews from tributes, and from the customs of salt, and from crown taxes. And from that which appertaineth unto me to receive for the third part of the seed, and the half of the fruit-trees, I release it from this day forth, so that they shall not be taken of the land of Judea, nor of the three governments which are added thereunto out of the country of Samaria and Galilee, from this day forth for evermore. Let Jerusalem also be holy and free, with the borders thereof, both from tents and tributes. And as for the tower which is at Jerusalem, I yield up my authority over it, and give it to the high-priest, that he may set in it such men as he shall choose to keep it. Moreover, I freely set at liberty every one of the Jews that were carried captives out of the land of Judea into any part of my kingdom, and I will that all my officers remit the tributes even of their cattle. Furthermore, I will that all the feasts, and sabbaths, and new moons, and solemn days, and the three days before the feast, and the three days after the feast, shall be all days of immunity and freedom for all the Jews of my realm. Also no man shall have authority to meddle with them, or to molest any of them in any matter. I will further, that there be enrolled among the king's forces about thirty thousand men of the Jews, unto whom pay shall be given, as belongeth to all the king's forces. And of them shall be placed in the king's strongholds, of whom also *some* shall be set over the affairs of the kingdom, which are of trust; and I will that their overseers and governors be of themselves, and that they live after their own laws, even as the king hath commanded in the land of Judea. And concerning the three governments that are added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be joined with Judea, that they may be reckoned to be under one, nor bound to obey other authority than the high-priest's. As for Ptolemais, and the land pertaining thereto, I give it as a free gift to the sanctuary. Moreover, I give every year fifteen thousand shekels of silver out of the king's accounts to the places appertaining. And all the overplus, which the officers payed not in as in former time, from henceforth shall be given toward the use of the temple. And beside this, the five thousand shekels of silver, which they took from the uses of the temple out of the accounts year by year, even those things shall be released, because they appertain to the priests that minister. And whosoever they be that flee unto the temple at Jerusalem, or be within the liberties thereof being indebted unto the king, or for any other matter, let them be at liberty, and all that they have in my realm. For the building also and the repairing of the works of the sanctuary, expenses shall be given out of the king's account. Yea, and for the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and the fortifying thereof round about, expenses shall be given out of the king's account, as also for the building of the walls of Judea."

The extravagant generosity of these offers made Jonathan and the patriots suspicious of their sincerity, and, mindful of the past sufferings they had experienced through Demetrius, they agreed to espouse the cause of Alexander.

Next year (152 B.C.) both the kings took the field with their armies, and Demetrius, who, when sober, wanted neither courage nor conduct, defeated his rival in the first battle; but A. Balas being reinforced by the kings who had put him forward, was more successful in a great battle fought the year after, in which Demetrius himself was slain.

The successful impostor now mounted the throne of Syria, and married Cleopatra, a daughter of his great friend P. Philometor of Egypt, who himself conducted the bride to Ptolemais in Palestine, where the nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence (150 B.C.). Jonathan was present on this occasion, and, mindful of the services he had rendered during the war, both Ptolemy and Alexander treated him with distinguished honours. He was again presented with a purple robe, and appointed commander or Meridarch of Judea.

Alexander Balas, who had manifested considerable ability during this contest, was no sooner firmly settled on the throne, than he lapsed into the same errors which had been fatal to his predecessor. He abandoned the cares of government to his favourite Ammonius, that he might enjoy a luxurious life undisturbed. This minister put to death all the members of the royal family he could get into his power. But there still lived in Cnidus two sons of Demetrius, the elder of whom, Demetrius II., surnamed Nicator, landed at Cilicia in 148 B.C., and soon collected a great army with which to assert his right to the crown. He also gained over to his interest Apollonius the governor of Cœle-Syria, whose first proof of attachment to his new master was to

[Demetrius Nicator.]

invade Judea, which still adhered to the cause of Alexander. Jonathan came down from the mountains into the plain of the coast, and after taking Joppa before his eyes, defeated Apollonius with terrible loss. Ashdod he then subdued, and Ascalon opened wide her gates to receive the conqueror. For this essential service he received from Alexander a golden clasp or buckle, such as only members of the royal family might wear; and the town and territory of Ekron, near the coast, was also bestowed upon him. The king himself remained shut up in Antioch, awaiting the succours which he expected from his father-in-law of Egypt. Philometor came indeed; but having discovered a plot formed against his life by the favourite Ammonius, and the infatuated Balas refusing to deliver up that guilty minister, Ptolemy testified his resentment by taking away his daughter, and bestowing her on Demetrius, whose cause he thenceforth espoused. This decided the contest. Ammonius was slain by the citizens, and A. Balas only avoided a similar fate by flight. The character which Ptolemy Philometor bore among the Syrians for justice and clemency was so high, that they pressed him to accept the vacant crown. But this he prudently declined, and recommended the rightful heir to their choice. The next year Alexander appeared again, in a condition to make one more struggle for the crown. He was defeated, and fled into Arabia, where an emir with whom he sought shelter, rendered his name, Zabdiel, infamous by the murder of his guest, whose head he sent to the king of Egypt. That monarch himself died the same year (146 B.C.). He left one son, a child, who was put to death by Physcon, who now reigned sole king of Egypt.

In Judea, Jonathan now employed himself in besieging the citadel of Jerusalem, which still remained in the hands of the apostate Jews and the Syrians, and which had so long proved a serious annoyance to the inhabitants of the city. Complaint of this operation having reached Demetrius, he cited Jonathan to Ptolemais to answer for his conduct. He went; but left orders that the siege should be vigorously prosecuted in his absence. He took with him valuable presents for the king, by which and other means he so won his favour, that he not only confirmed him in the high-priesthood and all his other honours, and also ratified the offers of his father, which Jonathan had once declined for the friendship of Balas. As the citadel still held out, Jonathan urged the king to withdraw the garrisons from it and from Bethsura; which Demetrius promised to do, provided the Jews would send a reinforcement to put down a dangerous disturbance which had broken out at Antioch; for the new king had already managed, by his gross misconduct and cruelty, to alienate the affections of both his Syrian subjects and Egyptian allies. The Jews rendered the required service. But when Demetrius deemed himself secure, and without further need of them, he behaved with great ingratitude. He demanded all the taxes, tolls, and tributes which he had promised to remit, and thus succeeded in alienating the Jews as much as his other subjects.

Alexander Balas left a son called Antiochus, whom the Arabian emir Zabdiel had retained in his hands when he slew the father; and he was persuaded by Tryphon (the former governor of Antioch under A. Balas) to send the young prince with him to lay claim to the throne of Syria. Antiochus was joyfully received by the malcontents, and by the numerous soldiers whom the false economy of Demetrius had disbanded. In a pitched battle, Demetrius was defeated, his elephants were taken, and Antioch was lost, 144 B.C.

As soon as Antiochus VI., surnamed

Theos, had been crowned, his guardian Tryphon (for Antiochus was but a child) wrote in his name to invite the adhesion of Jonathan; and offered in return to observe faithfully all the promises which Demetrius had broken, and to appoint his brother Simon the royal governor for the district extending from the mountains between Tyre and Ptolemais to the borders of Egypt. These conditions were accepted by Jonathan, who, with the assistance of the Syrian forces, expelled the hostile garrisons from Gaza, Bethsura, and Joppa; but the citadel of Jerusalem still held out for Demetrius.

With due regard to the past and the future, Jonathan deemed it advisable at this time to seek a renewal of the alliance with the Romans. The ambassadors were received at Rome with favour, and dismissed with assurances of friendship. On their return they (as the ambassadors of Judas had formerly done) visited the Spartans, and concluded a league with them, under some notion which the Jews entertained that the Spartans were of the stock of Abraham.

Tryphon had contemplated the advancement of the son of Alexander Balas, merely as a means of intruding himself into the throne of Syria. Things were now, in his judgment, ripe for the removal of the young king, and for his own intrusion, when he found that Jonathan was likely to prove an obstacle to the execution of his design. He therefore invaded Palestine, and had advanced as far as Bethshan, when, being intimidated by the appearance of Jonathan with forty thousand men, he pretended that his mission was entirely of a friendly nature —and that he had entered the country to put him in possession of Ptolemais. He played this part so naturally that the Jewish hero was deceived, and dismissed his army, saving three thousand men, two thousand of whom he left in Galilee, and advanced with the other thousand to take possession of Ptolemais. He had no sooner entered that city than the gates were shut, his men cut in pieces, and himself laden with chains. Not long after he was put to death by the perfidious Tryphon, who next slew his young master and set on his own brows the Syrian crown.

The Jews, whose prospects had lately been so fair, were filled with consternation when they heard of the captivity and subsequent murder of Jonathan. But SIMON, the brother of Jonathan, who had already been enabled to prove himself a true Maccabee, called them together in the temple, encouraged them to make a vigorous defence, and offered to become their high-priest and leader in the room of his brother. He said:— "Since all my brethren are slain for Israel's sake, and I alone am left, far be it from me to spare my own life in any time of trouble." The offer was gladly accepted by the people, and he was unanimously elected to succeed Jonathan: and, seeing he had sons of high promise, it was decided that the honours to which Simon was called should be inherited by his descendants. The form of expression is however remarkable, as showing that some doubts were entertained as to the strict legality of this procedure. It is said, "The Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their governor and priest [he and his sons] for ever, *until there should arise a faithful prophet to show them what they should do.*"

We are free to express our own opinion that the three brothers, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, were men of great ability and unquestionable courage; and we believe they sincerely desired the welfare of their country and to preserve the purity of religious worship, to promote which objects they would at any time have shed their last blood. But we also think that Judas is the only one of the brothers of whose high moral principle or disinterestedness much can be said. From the time that Jonathan accepted the high-priesthood and various personal honours from Alexander Balas, it is easy to detect in most of the alternations of policy a leaning to that course which *included* the aggrandisement of the family and the promotion of its chiefs. We do not say or think that they would knowingly have sacrificed any public object to their own aggrandisement. But the disposition to seek or prefer that particular good to our country which comprehends

honour or power to ourselves, belongs to a lower class of minds and principles than that which refuses wealth or power in connection with any public service, lest the motive of that service might be suspected. It must also be said, that the disposition of the later Maccabees to play fast and loose between the competitors for the Syrian crown, and equally to accept the favours which rival kings offered, when it was impossible to perform equally to both the conditions which were expected in return, is not entitled to much praise.

Had Jonathan and Simon been perfectly disinterested men, the obvious duty imposed upon them by the Law would have been to direct the attention of the Jews and of the Syrian king to Onias, then in Egypt, as the rightful high-priest, of the elder branch of the family of Aaron, who was unsuspected of any idolatrous taint, and whose abilities were of no common order: and the promises of the continuance of the sceptre of Judah to the house of David should have induced Simon, at least, when affairs were taking a turn favourable to the independence of the nation, to direct the hopes of Israel towards some able member of that illustrious house. But it is time to return to follow the course of our narrative.

Simon removed the corpse of his illustrious brother from Boscama in Gilead, where he

[Sepulchre at Modin.—Coin of Simon.]

was slain, to the family sepulchre at Modin, where he subsequently erected a noble mausoleum, which was still standing in the time of Eusebius and Jerome, and in which Simon must have taken some pride, as it is represented on his coins.

At the first opportunity, Simon sent an embassy to Rome and Lacedemon to announce to the senate the death of his brother, and his own succession to his dignities, and to seek a renewal of the alliance. Both nations received the ambassadors with honour, expressed the usual regret, and the usual congratulations, and readily renewed the treaty, with the terms of which graven on brass the deputation returned.

The first care of Simon was to put the country in a state of defence, by repairing the fortresses and furnishing them with provisions. As the conflict between Tryphon and Demetrius still continued, and it was the unhappiness of the Jews that their position did not allow them to remain neutral, there were many sufficient causes to induce them to prefer the side of Demetrius, notwithstanding the ill-treatment they had formerly received from him. This personage, although nearly the whole of Syria was lost to him, remained in luxurious repose at Laodicea, whither Simon sent ambassadors to him, with a crown of gold, to treat about the renewal of the former terms of accommodation. To this Demetrius in his fallen estate most gladly agreed, confirming solemnly all the immunities and privileges specified in his father's letter to Jonathan, with an act of amnesty for all past offences. These privileges were so great, that they may be said to have raised the nation to a station of independence. The Jews themselves certainly considered that they were by this act delivered from the Syrian yoke; and therefore this first year of Simon's reign (143 B.C.) as high-priest and ethnarch, or, in short, as Prince of the Jews, they signalised by making it an epoch from which to compute their times. This era is used on the coins of Simon, as well as by Josephus and the author of the first book of Maccabees.

The next care of Simon was to reduce the strong fortresses that still held out. Gaza he took, and expelled the idolatrous inhabitants; and the citadel of Jerusalem, which had so long been a thorn in the sides of the Maccabees, was compelled by the famine, which a rigorous blockade produced, to surrender in 142 B.C. Aware of the valour of his son John, Simon made him captain-general of his forces, and sent him to reside in Gazara on the sea-coast; while he made

the temple-mount at Jerusalem his own residence. This he strongly fortified; and his palace probably stood on the site which the castle of Antonia afterwards occupied.

Having thus gained complete possession of the country, and the rights and liberties of the nation being established, a great council of the nation was held at Jerusalem, which testified its gratitude by confirming to Simon all his honours, and, in more distinct terms than before, entailed them on his descendants. This decree of the assembly was graven on brass, and fixed to a monument which was erected in the temple-court.

Anxious to have the independence conceded by Demetrius recognised by the Romans, another embassy was sent to the senate, with a present of a shield of gold weighing one thousand minæ, equal at the lowest computation to fifty thousand pounds sterling. The deputation was well received, and the present graciously accepted. Their suit was granted, and missions were sent by the senate to the kings of Egypt, Pergamus, Cappadocia, Syria (Demetrius), and Parthia, and to all the cities and states of Greece, Asia Minor, and of the isles in alliance with the Romans, to engage them to treat the Jews as their friends and allies, 141 B.C.

In the same year Demetrius, whose cause appeared to be lost in the west, was invited to the east by large promises of support in any attempt he might make to bring back the Parthians to their allegiance. He was at first successful, but was in the end surprised and made prisoner by the Parthians. In this war he was assisted by a body of Jews under the command of John the son of Simon, whose exploits in Hyrcania procured him the honorary surname of HYRCANUS. As for Demetrius, he was well treated by the Parthian king, Arsaces V., otherwise called Mithridates; who indeed first took care to exhibit him in different parts of his empire, but afterwards sent him into Hyrcania, where he treated him with the respect due to his rank, and even gave him his daughter Rhodoguna in marriage. Meanwhile his cause in Syria was maintained against Tryphon by his wife Cleopatra, who had shut herself up, with her children, in Seleucia on

[Antiochus VII., Sidetes.]

the Orontes; and a powerful force composed of persons discontented with the government of Tryphon, was gathering around her, when she heard that her captive husband had married Rhodoguna. This offended her pride, and was also calculated to weaken her party. Therefore, from both policy and revenge, she sent to Antiochus, the brother of Demetrius, who was then at Rhodes, and made him the offer of her hand and of the kingdom. Antiochus VII., who, from his passion for hunting, received the surname of Sidetes ('the hunter'), eagerly accepted the proposal, and delayed not to assume the title of king of Syria, although as yet unable to proceed to the continent, 141 B.C.

The next year (140 B.C.) Antiochus wrote "from the isles of the sea," being still at Rhodes, "to Simon the high-priest and ethnarch, and to the people of the Jews," announcing his intention of coming speedily to recover the dominions of his father from the usurper Tryphon; and, to secure their assistance, confirming all the privileges granted by former kings, together with the royal privilege of coining money, which seems the only one which former kings had withheld, or which seemed wanting to complete the sort of secondary independence which they had by this time acquired.

The year after (139 B.C.) Antiochus landed in Syria to attack Tryphon, with whose tyrannies the people and even the soldiers had become completely weary. On the appearance of Sidetes he was deserted by most of his forces, and he therefore fled to Dora (south of Carmel) on the coast of Palestine. Antiochus pursued and besieged him there; but he fled by ship to Orthosia, a maritime town of Phœnicia; and, again,

from thence to Apamea, where he was taken and put to death.

Finding with how much more facility than he had been prepared to expect, the kingdom fell to him, Antiochus, very soon after his landing, formed the intention of reducing to their former complete subjection to the Syrian crown, the provinces and cities which had availed themselves of the troubled reigns of his predecessors to acquire such independence as the Jews had established. This was an intention which any king in those times was likely to have formed with reference to privileges so recent, and so much extorted by temporary emergencies, and by which the power and dignity of the crown was so seriously impaired. Antiochus probably considered his own acts more binding than the treaties obtained from the usurper Balas, or from the distressed Demetrius; yet even his own letter, written in the expectation of needing the aid which the event proved that he did not require, was not likely to be considered by him any strong bar to the execution of his design.

His intentions were indicated on his first arrival in Palestine, to besiege Tryphon in Dora. Simon then sent two thousand men to assist him in the siege, with a good supply of warlike stores and engines, but the king declined to receive them, and sent over to Jerusalem one of his generals, named Athenobius, with a requisition for the surrender of Joppa, Gazara, and the citadel of Jerusalem, which belonged to the Syrian crown, or else to pay five hundred talents for each of the former, and five hundred more for the arrears of tribute from those cities beyond the limits of Judea of which the Jews had gained possession, and on account of ravages which they had committed in his dominions. This demand was skilfully framed to steer clear of any points comprehended in the treaties or in the letter of Antiochus himself, and the demand seems upon the whole as moderate as could be framed consistently with the intention of retaining some hold upon the country. Writers call the answer of Simon "wise." It appears to us rather feeble. He denied that the Jews held any possessions *but what belonged to their fathers, and which they had found opportunity to recover*. With regard to the fortified towns of Joppa and Gazara, he called attention to the injuries which the people had been continually receiving from those places, as justifying the measures he had taken; but he was willing to give the king one hundred talents for the right of possession. Athenobius returned with this answer to the king, to whom also he gave a very flaming account of the state and splendour in which Simon lived, and of the large quantities of gold and silver plate which appeared in his house and at his table. At this the king was so moved, that he sent an army under Cendebeus to invade Judea: but he was met and defeated by John Hyrcanus and Judas, the two sons of Simon; and the Syrians were expelled the country.

The peace purchased by this victory was not of long duration. Simon availed himself of it to make a tour of inspection through the country, in the course of which he arrived at Jericho, where he took up his abode in the castle of his son-in-law Ptolemy, who was governor there. This Ptolemy, desiring to secure the government to himself, caused the old man and his two sons, Mattathias and Judas, to be treacherously murdered at an entertainment. He also sent a party to destroy John Hyrcanus at Gazara; but John had timely warning and fled to Jerusalem, where he was readily recognised by the people as the successor of his father in the high-priesthood, and in the principality of Judea. Then Ptolemy, against whom the people of Jerusalem shut their gates, fled to a fortress near Jericho, and from thence to Zeno, the prince of Philadelphia (Rabbath-Ammon), probably to await there the arrival of Antiochus, to whom he had sent desiring the assistance of an army to reduce Judea again to the Syrian yoke. But his name occurs in history no more; whence it is probable that although Antiochus may have liked the crime he hated the criminal, and would afford him no countenance. However, the king marched a large army into Judea in 135 B.C., and, having ravaged the country, advanced to besiege Hyrcanus in Jerusalem, which was soon reduced to great extremities

for want of provisions, which had been scarce that year. On the approach of the Feast of Tabernacles in autumn, Hyrcanus besought a week's truce for the celebration of the feast; and this was not only granted by Antiochus, but he furnished the victims required for sacrifice, which could not be procured within the city. Finally, he concluded a peace with the Jews, when it was in his power to extirpate them from the country, and he was exhorted by many to do so, but generously refused. He was content to dismantle Jerusalem, and to bind them to pay tribute (not for their proper country, but) for Joppa and other towns beyond the limits of Judea, which they had either taken by arms or held by the grants of his predecessors.

Four years after (131 B.C.) Antiochus Sidetes marched with a great army against the Parthians, under the pretence of delivering his brother Demetrius. Hyrcanus accompanied him in this expedition, and left him victorious in three battles over the Parthian king Phraates, which put A. Sidetes in possession of Babylonia, Media, and the other revolted provinces, and confined the Parthians within the original limits of their own kingdom. But while the Syrian army was dispersed in winter quarters, the Parthians, assisted by the natives, conspired against them, and slew them all in one day; Antiochus himself perished in the massacre, and scarcely a man remained to bear back to Syria the report of the catastrophe.

Upon this Phraates sent to re-take Demetrius, whom, after having been vanquished in the former campaign, he had liberated, and sent back to Syria, to create such a diversion there as might induce Antiochus to relinquish his enterprise. But Demetrius made such speed that he escaped the pursuit, and on his re-appearance in Syria, coupled with the news of the death of his brother, he was enabled to recover his throne without much difficulty.

Hyrcanus neglected not to avail himself of the confusion into which the Syrian empire fell, and the loss of strength which it sustained after the downfall of A. Sidetes. He got possession of several towns on the sea-coast, and beyond Jordan, and annexed them to his territories. He also rendered himself more completely independent; for after this neither he nor his descendants paid any more tribute, service, or homage to the kings of Syria. Next Hyrcanus invaded Samaria. He took Shechem, the chief seat of the Samaritans, and demolished the temple which they had built on mount Gerizim. However, they continued to have an altar on the spot, on which they have offered sacrifices, according to the Levitical law, even to the present time. After this, Hyrcanus invaded and subdued the Idumeans, to whom he offered the alternative of either relinquishing their idolatries and embracing the Jewish religion, or else of leaving the country into which they had intruded, and seeking a settlement elsewhere. They preferred the former alternative, and, as proselytes, gradually became so incorporated with the Jews as to be counted one people with them; and at length the name itself was lost, or absorbed in that of the Jews.

The course of events now again calls our attention to Egypt. That country was still ruled by Ptolemy Physcon, whose gross and beast-like person bore the very impress of that cruel and voluptuous character which belonged to him. We gladly hurry over the revolting theme, which his character and conduct offer, merely to mention that Cleopatra, the sister of the late Philometor and himself, became the wife of the former, by whom he had a son, and two daughters, both of the name of Cleopatra. After the death of Philometor, his young son was slain by Physcon, who also married the widow, his own sister. Of the two daughters, one was that Cleopatra who was married to Alexander Balas, king of Syria, then to Demetrius Nicator, then to Antiochus Sidetes, and after the return of Demetrius became his wife again. Her sister, the other Cleopatra, was defiled by her uncle Physcon, who afterwards repudiated his wife (her mother and his own sister), and married this young princess. His oppressions and cruelties towards his subjects were so severe, that at last they could bear them no longer, but rose against

him, and compelled him to flee to Cyprus. The people then entrusted the government to his sister and divorced wife, the elder Cleopatra. Her son by him was with his father at Cyprus, and Physcon, fearing that the son's name might be used to strengthen Cleopatra on the throne, slew him, and sent his head, feet, and hands to her, directing that they should be given her in the midst of an entertainment. In the war which followed, Physcon was victorious, and Cleopatra in her despair sent to Demetrius of Syria, the husband of her eldest daughter, offering him the crown of Egypt if he would come with an army to her aid. Allured by the splendid bribe, Demetrius immediately marched an army through Palestine into Egypt. But while he was engaged in the siege of Pelusium, Antioch and several other of his own cities revolted from him, and he was obliged to abandon the prospect before him and return the way he came. Cleopatra then fled to seek protection with her daughter the queen of Syria, who then resided at Ptolemais in Palestine. Physcon then regained possession of his throne, which he retained until his death in 117 B.C.

The passage and return of the Syrians through Palestine could not but be attended with much annoyance to the Jews, and it may be proper to regard it as in some measure the cause of the embassy which Hyrcanus sent to Rome the same year (128 B.C.), to solicit the renewal of the treaties into which the senate had entered with his predecessors, and to complain of the small attention which Antiochus and Demetrius had paid to its former mandates. The ambassadors were received with the usual favour by the senate, which readily consented to renew the treaty which had been concluded with Simon, and which moreover took upon itself to abrogate the disadvantageous treaty which the Jews had been compelled to make with A. Sidetes. It also decreed that Hyrcanus should hold the towns of Joppa, Gazara, and others beyond the limits of Judea, without paying tribute for them to the Syrian kings; and that the latter should not presume to march armies through Palestine without permission. This last clause was doubtless intended to check the enterprises of the kings of Syria against Egypt. Ambassadors were appointed to see all this executed; and the Jewish deputation were furnished with money to bear their expenses home. Hyrcanus was too sensible of the importance of these favours to neglect the expression of his gratitude; and the next year another embassy was sent to Rome with a present of a cup and shield of gold, which the senate accepted, and passed another decree confirming the former. By these treaties, as well as by the unquiet state of the Syrian kingdom, Hyrcanus was much strengthened in what we may now call his dominions.

Demetrius was one of those men whom even adversity could not improve. After his restoration, he fell into the same misconduct which had before occasioned him the loss of his kingdom. His subjects again were alienated from him; and readily joined a competitor who was brought forward and

[Alexander Zebinas.]

supported by P. Physcon, in revenge for the recent attempt of Demetrius to take possession of his kingdom. The young man put forward on this occasion was the son of a merchant of Alexandria, and claimed to be the adopted son of Antiochus Sidetes, or (according to some) of Alexander Balas. He assumed the name of Alexander, but was nicknamed in derision, Zebinas ['the bought one']. Notwithstanding the weakness of his pretensions, he easily succeeded in depriving the universally-disliked Demetrius of his kingdom and life, 126 B.C.

Zebinas was an equitable and popular ruler; but he did not obtain the whole of the kingdom, as part was retained by Cleopatra—that wife of many husbands who has so often been

named. To strengthen her cause she caused Seleucus, her son by Demetrius, to be proclaimed king of Syria, but retained all power in her own hands; and when in the twentieth year of his age (124 B.C.) he manifested a desire really to reign, she slew him by a javelin with her own hands. Alexander Zebinas, on the other hand, strengthened his cause by an alliance with John Hyrcanus, who skilfully availed himself of all these troubles to confirm his independence and to enlarge his dominions. Zebinas could not, however, long maintain his position. A very proper and spirited refusal to do homage to P. Physcon for the crown of Syria lost him the support, and procured him the enmity, of that monarch, who immediately came to terms with Cleopatra, and furnished her with an army whereby Zebinas was defeated, and ultimately fell into the hands of Ptolemy, who put him to death. Thus Cleopatra became mistress of all Syria, her younger son by Demetrius, Antiochus VIII., surnamed Gryphus, ['hook-nosed,' from γρὺψ, a vulture,] being seated on the throne. Soon after (120 B.C.), finding that Gryphus was also disposed to claim the power as well as name of king, she prepared poison for him; but she was detected, and the king compelled his murderous mother to drink the poisoned cup herself.

Ptolemy Physcon died in 117 B.C., twenty-nine years after his brother Philometor. He left all power in the hands of Cleopatra, his wife and daughter-in-law—sister of the Syrian queen, whose doom concluded the last paragraph. Physcon had by her two sons, Lathyrus and Alexander, and left to Cleopatra the choice of a king from them. She would have preferred the youngest, Alexander; but the voice of the people compelled her to appoint Ptolemy Lathyrus.

Antiochus Gryphus had a half brother, whom his mother Cleopatra had borne to Antiochus Sidetes. This young prince was sent by his mother to be brought up at Cyzicus on the Propontis, and hence his name of Antiochus Cyzicenus. He soon appeared as a competitor for the Syrian throne, and after various conflicts the brothers agreed in 112 B.C. to divide the empire between them. Antiochus Cyzicenus obtained Cœle-Syria and Phœnicia, and fixed his residence at Damascus. Both the kings were heartless libertines; and their relatively uneasy position gave them too much employment, in watching and annoying each other, to permit them to interfere much with the Jews, whose princes well knew how to avail themselves of such opportunities to aggrandise the power of the nation.

There is one exception. In 110 B.C. Hyrcanus ventured to besiege Samaria, the inhabitants of which were not Samaritans, properly so called, but were descended from the Syro-Macedonian colony which Alexander planted there when he rooted out the former inhabitants. The siege was conducted by Hyrcanus himself, with his two sons Aristobulus and Antigonus. They enclosed the city by a wall and a ditch, and all supplies being thus completely cut off, the place was soon reduced to the last extremity from scarcity of food. In this emergency the besieged sent to Antiochus Cyzicenus supplicating his aid. He marched himself to afford it, but was met on the way by a detachment of the Jewish army, under the command of Aristobulus. In a bloody engagement the Syrians were totally routed, and Antiochus Cyzicenus himself escaped with difficulty. In the next year (109 B.C.) Samaria was taken, and totally demolished. This victory, with its results, made Hyrcanus master of all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and of several places beyond their limits; and raised the glory of the Asamonean princes to its height. Hyrcanus spent the rest of his reign without foreign wars, and respected by all the neighbouring potentates. He died in 106 B.C., after a reign of thirty years.

It is to the last days of Hyrcanus we must refer the commencement of that interference of the Pharisees in public affairs, and of that enmity to the Asamonean house, which will bring them often under our notice in the subsequent pages of this narrative. The origin of the difference, which induced Hyrcanus to attach himself to the Sadducees, suffices to show that there were persons in Israel who were dissatisfied at the concentration of all civil and pontifical power in the same hands*.

* The story is:—At an entertainment given by Hyrcanus

Hyrcanus left the principality to his wife; but ARISTOBULUS, his eldest son, soon possessed himself of the government; and as his mother refused to lay down her authority, he committed her to prison, where she perished of hunger. Having established himself in the principality and high-priesthood, Aristobulus ventured on the very questionable step of assuming the diadem and regal title. And thus (as seems to have been predicted by Zechariah, vi. 9—15) was brought about that state of things, which early existed in Egypt and other countries, in which the offices of king and high-priest were united in the same person. Aristobulus availed himself of the disagreements between the two kings of Syria to extend his dominions. He subdued Iturea beyond Jordan, and offered the inhabitants the alternative of circumcision or expatriation. They preferred the former, and accordingly became Jews, and were incorporated with the Jewish nation. Aristobulus fell sick during this campaign, leaving his brother Antigonus to complete the subjection of the country, and the settlement of its affairs. On the return of the latter to Jerusalem, the king was taught to regard him as one who aimed at his life and kingdom, and under that mistaken impression, ordered his death. Discovering his error, he fell sick and died, after a reign of only one year, 105 B.C.

He was succeeded by his brother, the third son of Hyrcanus, ALEXANDER JANNÆUS, whose Hebrew name was probably Jonathan; as the name of "Jonathan" or "King Jonathan," occurs on some coins in the Hebrew, while the reverse has the legend "King Alexander" in Greek. He had been brought up in Galilee, and from early childhood he had not been admitted to the presence of his father. Alexander pursued the policy of his predecessors, of turning to his own advantage the divisions in the Syrian empire. Nor was he singular in this, for many cities (Tyre, Ptolemais, Gaza, Dora, and others) had contrived to make themselves independent. The last three of the cities we have named, Alexander Jannæus desired to subdue to his own power, which seems to us a very unprincipled design; but it is difficult to find anything like principle in the public transactions of any parties in this most unprincipled age. In 104 B.C. he took the field against Ptolemais, and detached a part of his army against Dora and Gaza. Before this time (namely, in 107 B.C.) Ptolemy Lathyrus had been expelled from Egypt by his mother, and withdrew to Cyprus, where he reigned up to the date to which we have now come. To him the beleaguered cities now applied for aid. This he readily granted, and landed in Palestine with an army of 30,000 men. He was very successful, defeating Alexander in a pitched battle on the banks of the Jordan, in which the Jews lost 30,000 men, and then overrunning and furiously ravaging the country, so that the Asamonean cause seemed on the brink of utter ruin, when Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt*, fearing that the conquest of Palestine by Lathyrus would be but a step towards the invasion of Egypt, sent an

to the Pharisees, of whose sect he was a jealous member, he, not very wisely we imagine, invited the persons present to inform him of any failure in his duty towards God or man, which might have come to their knowledge. As might be expected, he got from the guests all the compliments for which he so obviously laid himself out; the room rung with testimonials of his blameless conduct, and with praise of his many virtues. When this had ceased, one Eleazer ventured to say that he ought to resign the high-priesthood, and to content himself with the civil government of the nation. This was too true not to be galling; and Eleazer was pressed for a reason in such a manner as made him fearful of the consequences, and to think it better to make his objection puerile, by raising it on a ground on which he could not but know it would not stand. He alleged that the mother of Hyrcanus having at one time been a captive, it was uncertain whether he was a descendant of Aaron or of a pagan. This, Josephus tells us, was palpably untrue, and if so, it could only have been used, as we suggest, for an evasion. As it was, Hyrcanus was deeply offended; and the Sadducees adroitly managed to put all the Pharisees out of his good opinion. Jonathan, his intimate friend and a Sadducee, persuaded him that the whole party concurred with Eleazer, as he might ascertain by the very inadequate punishment which they would, if asked, name as the due of that free-spoken person. Jonathan knew that the Pharisees were such fatalists, that they took a low view of a man's penal responsibility for his own actions, and were therefore much milder in their punishments than the Sadducees, who maintained the perfect freedom of man's will to choose and act. This seems to have been overlooked by Hyrcanus, and when they named *only* imprisonment and scourging as the just punishment of a man whom he appears to have thought worthy of death—his displeasure knew no bounds, and he renounced all connection with the sect. Upon the whole, Hyrcanus does not shine much in this affair, although historians report it to his honour.

* Her favourite son Alexander had been set by her on the throne on the expulsion of Lathyrus; but the mother actually reigned.

army to the assistance of Alexander. By this means he recovered his footing, and Lathyrus was compelled to withdraw to Cyprus, 101 B.C. Alexander had gained none of the original objects of the war he had so unjustly commenced, and the nation had suffered greatly. The king soon after paid a visit to the Egyptian queen, to whom he had been so much indebted. This visit had nearly proved fatal to him. This ambitious and unscrupulous woman was advised to put him to death, and unite Judea to Egypt: and she was inclining to listen to such suggestions, when the interposition of Ananias, the Jewish commander of her forces, inclined her to a more just and generous policy, and she concluded an alliance with Jannæus at Bethshan (Scythopolis).

After Cleopatra had returned to her own country, Alexander began to resume his former projects of reducing to his yoke the towns and fortresses on his borders—pursuing, in short, the same needlessly aggressive policy which had well nigh been his ruin. Gadara he took after a ten months' siege. He also took the strong fortress of Amathus beyond Jordan; but on his return he was surprised and defeated with the loss of 10,000 men, by the prince of Philadelphia, whose treasures had been deposited there, and returned with disgrace to Jerusalem. He was a Sadducee: this, and his other humiliations, were therefore matters of high satisfaction to the Pharisees, who had great influence with the mass of the people, which they employed with much success, to alienate their affections from Alexander. The king, nothing discouraged, turned his attention to the towns on his southern border. Raphia and Anthedon he took: the conquest of Gaza was more difficult; but at last he won it by treachery, burned it, and massacred the inhabitants, but with so much loss to his own troops that he returned with little honour and less spoil to Jerusalem.

The long-cherished hatred of the Pharisees, and dislike of the people towards the king, broke out openly in the year 95 B.C. He was officiating as high-priest at the Feast of Tabernacles, and was offering sacrifice upon the great altar, when the people began to pelt him furiously with the citrons which they bore in their hands at that celebration, at the same time assailing him with the most opprobrious expressions. In accordance with the severe principles of the Sadducees, which he had on so many occasions exemplified, he let loose his guard upon the insurgents, by whom 6000 of them were cut down, and thus the disturbance was, for the time, allayed with blood. To prevent such insults in future, he enclosed the priests' court, which contained the altar and sanctuary, by a wooden partition, which excluded the approach of the people, and for his greater security he took into his pay a body of 6000 foreign mercenaries, who soon became almost his only support.

After this Alexander Jannæus turned his attention to the countries beyond Jordan. In 94 B.C. he made the Arabs of Gilead and the inhabitants of Moab tributary. In 93 B.C. he destroyed the strong fortress of Amathus, his former enterprise against which had been followed by his defeat, as lately mentioned. In the next year, while in a campaign against Obodas, the Emir of the Arabs of Gaulonitis, he fell into an ambush in the mountains near Gadara, where his army was driven over the precipices and utterly destroyed, and he himself escaped with difficulty. This disaster embittered the feelings of the already discontented Pharisees, who were at all times jealous even to madness of the national honour. A successful and glorious Sadducee they might have borne, but an unsuccessful one was intolerable. They took up arms, supported by the masses, and broke out into open rebellion, which they maintained for six years, and in which, although repeatedly defeated, their refractory spirit remained unsubdued. At last, after 50,000 of the malcontents had been destroyed, besides the loss on the other side, the king, although successful, became weary of slaughter and intestine turmoil, and made every effort and declared his readiness to make any sacrifice for the sake of peace. He sent some of his friends to the assembled people to know what he could do to satisfy them—"DIE!" was the answer, given with such vehemence and fury as showed him that there was no hope of accommodation. The malcontents

on their part, sought the help of the Moabites and the Arabians of Gilead, whom Alexander had made tributary, and whose tribute he was now obliged to remit, to prevent their hostilities. The invitation was then sent to Demetrius Eucerus, king of Damascus*. He gladly accepted the call, and entered Judea with an army of forty thousand foot and three thousand horse, with which he overthrew Alexander, with the loss of all his Greek mercenaries to a man. B.C. 89. His utter ruin was inevitable, had it not been that six thousand of the Jews themselves, taking compassion upon his distress, deserted from the Syrians, and joined him. This so much alarmed Demetrius, fearing lest the defection should extend, that he withdrew his forces from the country to employ them against his brother Philip, who had obtained possession of part of Syria. The indomitable spirit of Alexander Jannæus, and the large resources which he found in himself, now very conspicuously appeared; for no sooner had the Syrians departed than he again got together his broken army, and recommenced operations with increased vigour and success against his own discontented subjects. In one great action, fought in 87 B.C., he utterly cut off the greater part of the insurgent army, and shut up the remainder in Bethone, which he besieged and took the year after. On this occasion he was guilty of a most barbarous act, for which the nick-name of "Thracian" was justly given to him. He sent eight hundred of the principal captives to Jerusalem, and there crucified them all in one day and in one place, and put their wives and children to death before their eyes, as they hung dying on the crosses, while he sat, feasting with his wives and concubines, within view of the horrid scene, to glut his eyes with their torments. Certainly, the existence of a man who could do this was an evil upon the earth; and it seems alone sufficient to induce a suspicion that there was good cause for the intense dislike with which he was regarded by the people.

* The affairs of Syria and Egypt have by this time become so disconnected with those of Palestine, that it will not be necessary to trace them further.

After this Alexander had no more disturbance, and he was enabled to spend three years in recovering the fortresses which had revolted, and in reducing the provinces beyond Jordan which had got loose from his dominion during the civil war. Returning victorious to Jerusalem in 82 B.C., he abandoned himself to luxury and revelling, which speedily brought on a quartan ague, under which he languished for three years, and of which he died in 78 B.C., at the siege of Ragaba beyond Jordan, in the country of the Gergesenes, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and the twenty-seventh of his eventful reign. That reign might be deemed successful in its ultimate results, if judged only by the enlarged dominion which he left to his successors; for at his death the Jewish kingdom included Mount Carmel, and all the coast as far as Rhinocolura; it embraced on the south all Idumea; northward it extended to Scythopolis (Bethshan) and Mount Tabor; and beyond Jordan it comprehended Gaulonitis, and all the territory of Gadara, including the land of the Moabites on the south, and extending as far as Pella on the east.

Alexander Jannæus left the government in the hands of his Queen ALEXANDRA, influenced doubtless by the recent example of the female reigns in Egypt and Syria. She was to enjoy the government while she lived, and was to determine which of her two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, should succeed her. On the approach of death, Alexander gave such counsels as he judged best calculated to ensure her a peaceable reign. Sensible that most of his own troubles had been produced through the agency of the great control which the Pharisees had acquired over public opinion, he exhorted her above all things to cultivate their favour, and to attempt no public measure without their approval. This advice may have been good, but the motive claims no high commendation. He wished his wife to reign after him, and to secure that private object he was willing that all the energies of the government should be sacrificed, and that all the powers of the state should be thrown into the hands of men whom, whether justly or not, he despised and hated. He also

instructed the queen what course to take in throwing herself into the hands of the Pharisees. He counselled her to conceal his death until the capture of the fortress, and then, on the triumphant return to Jerusalem, she was to convene the heads of the Pharisees, and offer to be guided entirely by their counsels in the administration of the government; she was also to lay his dead body before them, and leave it wholly to their discretion whether to treat it with ignominy or honour. "If thou dost but this," concluded the king, "*I* shall be sure of a glorious funeral, and *thou* wilt rule in safety." Alexandra followed all his directions to the letter, and the event answered to his prediction. The Pharisees were suddenly appeased, as by a miracle; they spoke with profound reverence of the king, whose death they had so often invoked; they lauded to the skies his heroic achievements, and none of all his predecessors had a funeral nearly as magnificent as that of Alexander Jannæus.

The Pharisees, having now the upper hand in the state, proceeded to do what any successful party would have done in the same circumstances. They released all the prisoners, and recalled all the exiles of their own party; and being thus strengthened by the recovery of the ablest men of their body, they delayed not to demand justice against the advisers of the crucifixion of the eight hundred; and certainly, if there were any persons active in advising that dreadful enormity, they richly deserved punishment. Diogenes, the chief confidant of the late king, was the first to feel the wrath and vengeance of the Pharisees; and after he had been cut off, they proceeded to the more obnoxious of Alexander's advisers. The queen, sore against her will, submitted to all their demands, to avoid the worst evils of a civil war.

Queen Alexandra appointed to the high-priesthood her eldest son Hyrcanus, a person of mild and inactive disposition, ill qualified to take part in the turmoils of the troubled days in which he was cast. The other son, Aristobulus, was of a different spirit—with the same impulsive energies of character, and nearly as unscrupulous, as his father. He burned with indignation at the degraded, although safe, position which his mother occupied; and in the seventh year of her reign (72 B.C.) he appeared before her at the head of a large party of friends of congenial sentiments, and solicited permission either to leave the country or to be permitted to retire to the frontier garrison towns, where they might be secure from the malice of the Pharisees. The queen agreed to the latter proposal, and put them in possession of all the fortresses, except Hyrcania, Alexandrium, and Machærus, where she kept her treasures. Next year Aristobulus was entrusted with the command of an army sent against Damascus, but he returned without doing anything memorable, although he was mindful not to neglect the opportunity of ingratiating himself with the troops.

In the year 69 B.C. some attempts made by Selene (reigning in Ptolemais) to extend her dominions in Cœle-Syria, drew the attention

[Tigranes.]

of Tigranes, the Armenian king, whom the Syrians had called to reign over them. He came against her with a large army, subdued Ptolemais, took Selene prisoner, and ultimately ordered her to be put to death at Seleucia, on the Tigris. Her sons were at Rome. While Tigranes was engaged before Ptolemais, Alexandra sent an embassy with valuable presents to obtain his friendship. The rapid progress which the Romans were at this time making in Asia Minor so strongly called his attention to that quarter, that he returned a more favourable answer than might have been expected, and hastened back to his own country. Queen Alexandra died in the same year.

On the death of his mother the mild and feeble HYRCANUS took possession of the throne. He reigned only three months. His more en-

terprising and able brother, Aristobulus, had obtained possession of most of the fortresses in the kingdom during the sickness of his mother: the people, also, had by this time grown weary of the tyranny of the Pharisees, and greatly fearing the possible results of their ascendancy over such a person as Hyrcanus, readily declared themselves in favour of his brother: and as the soldiers also deserted to him, Hyrcanus had no alternative but to resign his crown and mitre to ARISTOBULUS; and he agreed, with little reluctance, to lead a private life under his protection. "So," as Josephus expresses it, "Aristobulus went to the palace, and Hyrcanus to the house of Aristobulus."

An Idumean originally called Antipas, but better known by the name of ANTIPATER, had by this time become a great man in Judea. He was high in the confidence of Alexander Jannæus, and of Queen Alexandra, who had entrusted him with the government of his native province of Idumea. He had amassed considerable wealth, and formed connections with the Arabs in the east, and with the Gazites and Ascalonites in the west. Such a man might expect, under a weak ruler like Hyrcanus, to benefit largely by the distractions of the country; whereas the firm rule of a man like Aristobulus was calculated to nip all his budding hopes. This consideration decided him to take up the cause of the deposed Hyrcanus, whom he gradually drew into the belief that his brother had designs against his life; and after much solicitation, persuaded him to flee to Petra, and claim the protection of the Arabian king Aretas. That prince readily espoused his cause, and brought him back to Judea, with an army of 50,000 men; and being there joined by such of the Jews as favoured the cause of the elder brother, he gave battle to Aristobulus, defeated him, and compelled him, with the heads of his party, to take refuge in the temple-mount, and besieged him there, 66 B.C.

So great was the hatred of the besiegers against Aristobulus and his party that, at the feast of the Passover, they would allow no animals for sacrifices to be carried into the temple, although Aristobulus had given to them over the walls the full sum they demanded for such permission.

The great war of the Romans in Asia Minor against Mithridates king of Pontus is of importance from its result of bringing all Western Asia under the power of the Romans; but the circumstances of that war have no such connection with our history as to require their exhibition in this place. Tigranes was soon involved in this war; and in 69 B.C. he was obliged to withdraw his forces from Syria to make head against the Romans nearer home.

This gave an opportunity to Antiochus Asiaticus, the son of Selene and A. Eusebes,

[Antiochus XI., Asiaticus.]

to seize the government; and, having contracted an alliance with the Roman general Lucullus, he contrived to retain a part of the empire until the arrival of Pompey in the East. He arrived to take the command of the Roman armies in the year 66 B.C. While himself employed in the north against Mithridates and Tigranes, Pompey sent Scaurus into Syria. While that general was at Damascus he received from Aristobulus (then besieged in the temple) an application with the offer of four hundred talents if he would come to his aid. The offer of a similar sum soon after came from Hyrcanus; but the Roman, considering that it would be easier to frighten away the

[Pompey and his sons.]

besieging Nabathæans for Aristobulus, than to take so strong a fortress for Hyrcanus, determined to accept the offer of the former. He accordingly received the money; and

three hundred talents were also given to Gabinius. Scaurus then commanded Aretas to abandon the siege and quit the country, or expect that the Roman arms would be turned against him. Awed by this threat, the Arabian king immediately obeyed; but he was pursued and overtaken in his homeward march by the active Aristobulus, and defeated with great slaughter.

In 65 B.C. Pompey came into Syria, all the princes of which were prepared to look to him as the arbiter of their fate. Antiochus Asiaticus humbly sued to be confirmed in his kingdom; but he was refused, on the pretext that he was too weak to defend the country against the Jews and Arabs; and that the Romans having overcome Tigranes, Syria became theirs by right of conquest, and they were not disposed to forego the rewards of their toils. In the person of Antiochus XI. was deposed the last of a regal dynasty, descended from Seleucus, which had ruled Syria for two hundred and forty-seven years. His dominions, together with Phœnicia, then passed into the condition of a Roman province.

Twelve kings, and many ambassadors, repaired to Damascus to render their homage to the illustrious Roman, or to receive from him the award of their fate. Aristobulus, to whom the recognition of his title by the Romans was at this time of great importance, sent an embassy with the present of a golden vine, valued at 500 talents. But as those who saw this vine subsequently in the capitol at Rome declare that it bore the name of Alexander Jannæus*, it would seem that he was not successful in his application†, unless, as some imagine, the vine had been made by Alexander Jannæus and placed in the temple, from which it was taken by his son to be presented to the Romans‡.

* Strabo in Joseph. Antiq. xiv. 3.

† It is well known that the Romans in receiving such presents often inscribed upon them the names, not of the actual donor, if they disliked to recognise him, but of a predecessor who might be supposed to have had the intention of making the present, if death or other circumstances had not intervened.

‡ Among the kings present at Damascus was Ptolemy Alexander, the king of Egypt, who had been lately deposed by his subjects. He applied to be re-established on his throne, but as his request was neglected, he withdrew to Tyre, where he soon after died, bequeathing his kingdom to the Romans. The Egyptians had placed on the throne Ptolemy Auletes ['the piper'], also called Neos Dionysius, ['young Dionysius,'] an illegitimate son of P. Lathyrus; and he also sent ambassadors to Pompey at Damascus, with a golden crown valued at four thousand pieces of gold. He acquired the friendship of Pompey, which stood him in great stead afterwards; for after he had been expelled by the Egyptians, to whom he had rendered himself odious by his vices and low habits, he was restored by the Romans, chiefly through the influence of that powerful friend, 55 B.C. He died in 51 B.C., leaving two sons, both named Ptolemy, and two daughters, Cleopatra and Arsinoe, the former famous for the part she bears in the history of Julius Cæsar and Mark Anthony.

The next year, 64 B.C., Pompey again returned to Damascus from Asia Minor, with large designs for the southward extension of the Roman power, which had already been established as far as the Caspian in the north. At that place, the competing Jewish princes produced their cause before him. Hyrcanus through Antipater, and Aristobulus through Nicodemus. The delegates were heard, and dismissed in a friendly manner, with orders that the two brothers should appear in person. Unfortunately for Aristobulus his cause was much prejudiced by the allusion of Nicodemus to the bribes which Scaurus and Gabinius had received, whereby he provoked the resentment of two persons whose influence with Pompey was very great. As ordered, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus appeared at Damascus in the spring of 63 B.C. to plead their own cause before Pompey, and each attended by multitudes of witnesses to prove the justice of their respective claims. A third Jewish party, uninvited and undesired by either of the others, also appeared, in the persons of many Jews of high consideration, who were prepared to plead, and did plead, against *both* the brothers, that in order to enslave a free people they had changed the form of government from pontifical to regal, contrary to established usage and precedent. Hyrcanus, on his part, rested on his rights as the elder brother, and complained of the usurpation of Aristobulus: the latter pleaded the necessity which the imbecile character of Hyrcanus had imposed upon him. This was precisely the worst plea he could have made; for imbecility of character was, for their own selfish ends, far from being esteemed a disqualification by the Romans in the princes

under their control. However, Pompey did not openly declare his sentiments, but left the matter undecided, until he should have leisure to come in person to Jerusalem, and settle it there But Aristobulus, perceiving clearly that the decision would not be in his favour, withdrew without taking leave, in order to make the requisite preparations, and he thus rendered his case still more desperate.

Pompey was occupied for a time in reducing Aretas and his Nabathæans to subjection. This being effected, he marched against Aristobulus, of whose hostile preparations he was well apprised. He found him in the frontier fortress of Alexandrium (which was situated upon the top of a high rock), and well prepared for an attack. On his arrival, Pompey summoned the Jewish prince to his presence; and Aristobulus, afraid of irritating him by a refusal, and relying on his honour, came down, and had several interviews with the Roman general, who, in the end, refused to let him go, until he had signed an order for the surrender of all the fortresses to the Romans. But, resenting deeply this imposition, Aristobulus was no sooner dismissed than he fled to Jerusalem, and there prepared for a siege. But when Pompey approached with his army his resolution forsook him, as well it might; and he went forth to meet the Roman, to whom he tendered his submission, and offered a sum of money to prevent a war. His proposal was accepted; and Gabinius, one of Pompey's lieutenants, whom there has been previous occasion to name, was sent with a body of troops to recover the city, and to receive the money. But when Aristobulus returned with the Romans, his own party shut the gates against him and them, on which the captive prince was put in chains. Pompey then himself marched to Jerusalem; and the party of Hyrcanus being the most numerous in the city, and well aware of his favourable dispositions towards them, opened the gates to him. The party of Aristobulus now withdrew into the temple, which was by this time a strong fortress, fully resolved to abide the result of a siege. They held out for three months, and might have done so much longer, but for the remaining superstition respecting the Sabbath. Pompey being apprised, that although that on that, as on any other day, they would stand on their defence if actually attacked, they would not on that day act on the offensive, or disturb any operations short of actual assault,—he sagaciously made use of every Sabbath in filling up the ditch and planting his engines, in which he experienced not the least opposition, and this enabled him to make his attacks with more effect on the other days of the week. At last the temple was taken by assault, in the first year of the 179th Olympiad, ending in 63 B.C., the same year in which C. Antonius and M. Tullius Cicero were consuls, and on the very day observed with fasting and humiliation, on account of the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. These dates fixed the year from which the direct rule of the Romans over Judea may be dated.

Pompey violated the sanctity of the temple by intruding with his principal officers into the holy of holies. He was not stricken as Ptolemy Philopator and Heliodorus had been, but it has been remarked, by some, that he never prospered in any of his subsequent undertakings. By the Jews, of course, this act was deeply resented. Pompey, however, spared the sacred treasury, although it contained 2000 talents; and the sacred utensils, and other articles of great value, were left for the sacred uses to which they had been devoted. But he ordered the walls of Jerusalem to be demolished. Hyrcanus he appointed to be high-priest and prince of the country, on condition that he should submit to the Romans, pay tribute, not assume the crown, nor seek to extend his territory beyond the ancient limits of Judea. All the places beyond those limits, which the Jews had conquered, were also restored to Syria, which was made a Roman province, and left under the rule of Scaurus as prefect, with two legions to preserve tranquillity. Thus the Jews, from being old allies of the Romans, were at once reduced to the condition of a subordinate principality, and were compelled to pay large tribute to the conquerors.

Pompey returned to Rome, laden with the

spoils of conquered nations, and with a long train of royal and illustrious captives to grace his triumph. Among them were Aristobulus, his two daughters, and his two sons, Alexander and Antigonus. Alexander escaped by the way, and returned to Judea. The rest were among the three hundred and twenty-four noble prisoners who graced the triumph of Pompey, in 61 B.C. Pompey was the first to discontinue the barbarous custom of putting the captives to death in the capitol after this public exhibition. They were all liberated, and sent home at the public expense, with the exception of Tigranes and Aristobulus, who were detained lest they should excite disturbances in their respective countries.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROMANS.

ALTHOUGH HYRCANUS II. had again become the nominal head of the reduced and dependent princedom of Judea, Antipater was the actual governor, and managed all things as he would.

In the year 57 B.C. Alexander, the eldest son of Aristobulus, who had escaped on the way to Rome, reappeared in Judea, and soon succeeded in collecting an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. He seized and garrisoned the strong fortresses of Alexandrium, Machærus, Hyrcania, and several others; and thence ravaged the whole country. Hyrcanus was not in a condition to make head against him: but for the protection of Jerusalem he was desirous of rebuilding the walls of that city; but this was forbidden by the jealousy of the Romans, and the prince was then obliged to apply to them for assistance. Gabinius (the same who had before been in the country with Pompey), who had lately become proconsul of Syria, sent some troops into Judea under the command of Mark Anthony, the commander of the cavalry—who afterwards took so conspicuous a part in the affairs of Rome, while he prepared to follow himself with a larger army. The Roman general, being joined by Antipater with the forces of Hyrcanus, defeated Alexander near Jerusalem, with the loss of three thousand men, and compelled him to seek refuge in Alexandrium, to which siege was immediately laid. Gabinius, who had now arrived, perceiving that the reduction of so strong a place would require time, left a sufficient force to invest it, and with the rest made a progress through the country. Many cities which he found in ruins, he directed to be rebuilt, according to the intentions of Pompey*: among these was Samaria, which, after his own name, he called Gabiana, which was not long after changed by Herod to Sebaste. When he returned to the camp at Alexandrium he was visited by the mother of the besieged Alexander, who had already offered to capitulate, and now, by her address and mediation, was allowed to depart on condition that the fortresses which he held in his power should be demolished, that they might give no occasion for future revolts.

Gabinius then went to Jerusalem, and confirmed Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood: but he took upon him to change the government to an aristocracy, undoubtedly at the request of the Jews themselves, who had formerly much desired such a change from Pompey. Hitherto the administration of public affairs had been managed, under the prince, by two councils, or courts of justice; the lesser, consisting of twenty-three persons, was instituted in every city, and each of these lesser councils was subject to the control of the great council, or Sanhedrim, of seventy-two members, sitting at Jerusalem. Both

* Those were—Scythopolis (Bethshan), Samaria, Dora, Azotus or Ashdod, Jamnia, Gaza, Anthedon, Raphia, Gamala, Apollonia, Marissa, and some others.

were suppressed by Gabinius, who divided the country into five districts, appointing in each an executive council for its government. These districts will be sufficiently indicated by the names of the cities in which the respective councils sat:—Jerusalem, Jericho, Gadara, Amathus, and Sepphoris. This, in fact, changed the government into an aristocracy, for all real power rested in the hands of the several councils, composed of the principal persons of each district, and the power of the prince was completely nullified. This form of government continued to the year 44 B.C., when Hyrcanus was restored to his former power by Julius Cæsar.

About this time Aristobulus contrived to escape from his captivity at Rome, with his younger son Antigonus, and returned to Judea, where his presence excited a revolt. But he was ere long defeated, taken captive with his son, and sent back again to his former prison. The report which Gabinius sent, however, of the services which the wife of Aristobulus had rendered in suppressing her son Alexander's insurrection, procured the release of all the family except Aristobulus himself.

In 56 B.C. Gabinius undertook to restore Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt. He and Mark Anthony succeeded in this object, in which they received no slight assistance from Hyrcanus, or rather from Antipater, who eagerly laid hold of every opportunity of serving and ingratiating himself with the Romans, through whose favour alone could he hope that his ambitious designs would ever be realised. By his means the Roman army was most bountifully furnished with provisions, arms, and money; and measures were taken to dispose the Jews of Egypt to forward their cause, which they had large means of doing. While the substantial force of the Romans was absent on this expedition, Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, got together a large army, with which he contrived to make himself master of Judea, and massacred all the Romans who had the misfortune to fall in his way. Several fled to Mount Gerizim, and were there besieged by Alexander, when Gabinius returned victorious from Egypt. The proconsul endeavoured, through Antipater, to make peace with him; but as, although many had abandoned him on the approach of the Romans, he was still at the head of thirty thousand men, he refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. In a battle, which soon followed, near Mount Tabor, ten thousand of his men were slain, and the rest dispersed. Gabinius then went to Jerusalem, and settled affairs there according to the views of Antipater, who had much influence both with him and Anthony.

In the year 55 the proconsul Gabinius was recalled, to answer for the venality and extortion of his government. Yet he is regretted by Josephus as one who was friendly to the Jews; who, however, had to pay a high price for his friendship. They certainly gained nothing by the exchange, for the new proconsul, who was no other than the wealthy and avaricious Crassus (the colleague of Pompey and Julius Cæsar in the triumvirate), who procured himself to be invested with unusually large powers, and who, being consul for that year, embarked for Syria before his consulship expired. Crassus was bent on an expedition against the Parthians: and he failed not, before his departure, to plunder the temple at Jerusalem of all the treasures which Pompey had spared. He took everything that he deemed worth taking, and the value of his plunder is estimated at ten thousand talents. In the war against the Parthians, which was entirely unexpected and unprovoked, Crassus was at first successful; but, in the end, he and his son were slain, and the Roman army disgraced, B.C. 53.

Cassius, who had commanded a wing of the Roman army in the battle, conducted a body of five hundred horse safely back to Syria, the government of which devolved on him until a successor to Crassus should be appointed. Having, with much ability, so organised the broken resources of the province as to defend it successfully against the Parthian invasion of 52 B.C., he afterwards marched into Judea and forced Alexander, who began raising fresh disturbances as soon as the news of the defeat of Crassus arrived in Syria, to terms of peace.

In the civil war which broke out between Pompey and Cæsar, Syria and Palestine were variously involved. When Cæsar passed the

[Julius Cæsar.]

Rubicon in 49 B.C., and made himself master of Rome, he thought that Aristobulus might be useful to his cause against that of Pompey, which was strong in the east; and therefore sent him into Palestine, with two legions under his command, to keep Syria in awe. But Pompey's party contrived to poison him on the way, and thus frustrated the design. His always active son, Alexander, had raised forces in expectation of his father's arrival; but Pompey sent orders to his son-in-law, Q. Metellus Scipio, whom he had promoted to the government of Syria, to put him to death. He was accordingly taken, brought to Antioch, tried, and beheaded.

In the midst of all the causes of agitation in Judea—from the contests of the Asamonean princes—from the different characters of the governors of Syria—from the march of armies—from the intrigues which divided courts and people in the quarrel between Pompey and Cæsar—Antipater never slept, was never found wanting to himself. He had availed himself of his power over the feeble Hyrcanus to make for himself a personal influence and reputation, through the services he was thereby able to render to the various parties and persons whose friendship might be useful to him. He was moreover the father of four sons, who understood and concurred in his views—all of them brave, ambitious, magnificent, full of spirit, and high hopes. One of them, Phasael, was already governor of Jerusalem, and another, HEROD, was governor of Galilee. These, it will be perceived, were two of the five districts into which the country had been divided by Gabinius. Thus the family went on gathering strength from day to day, while the Asamonean family—through the imbecility of Hyrcanus, and the reverses of Aristobulus and his sons—sustained a daily loss of power and influence. In the contest between Pompey and Cæsar, Antipater, who was under obligations to the former, was in a critical and difficult position. But such men as he are never wrong. Their felicitous instincts enable them to discover the falling cause in sufficient time to make the abandonment of it a merit with him whose star is rising. Thus Antipater turned in good time to the side of the new master; and in the Egyptian campaign rendered important services to Cæsar, by bringing to his aid the forces concentrated in Judea, Idumea, and part of Arabia, while in action he displayed great abilities and courage, which no one knew better than Cæsar how to appreciate and respect. On his return from Egypt, the crown of which he had fixed on the head of the too-celebrated Cleopatra, the eldest daughter of Ptolemy Auletes, he went to Jerusalem, and there employed the absolute power he possessed quite in subservience to the views and wishes of Antipater. In vain did Antigonus, the surviving son of Aristobulus, appear, and plead that the lives of his father and brother had been lost in his cause: he was heard coldly, and dismissed as a troublesome person. Cæsar abrogated the aristocratical government which Gabinius had established ten years before, and confirmed Hyrcanus in his full powers as high-priest and ethnarch. He ordered the remission every sabbatic year of the annual tribute payable to the Romans: he further conceded that the Jews should not, as formerly, be obliged to provide winter quarters for the Roman troops, or to pay an equivalent in money; and he granted such further privileges and immunities to the Jews throughout the empire, that the Roman yoke became very light upon them for a time. Antipater himself was appointed procurator of Judea for the Romans. The decree in which these privileges were embodied was engraved on brass,

and laid up in the capitol at Rome, and in the temples of Zidon, Tyre, and Ascalon. Hyrcanus afterwards ventured, by ambassadors sent to Rome, to solicit permission to fortify Jerusalem, and to rebuild the walls which Pompey had thrown down. This was granted by Cæsar, and immediately executed by Antipater.

Julius Cæsar left the government of Syria in the hands of Sextus Cæsar, his relative, who was also well disposed towards the family of Antipater. The promotion of his son Herod to be governor of Galilee has already been noticed. He displayed great activity and daring in clearing his province of the robbers by which it had been infested. But, having put the leader of these banditti, with several of his associates to death, by his own mere authority, without any form of trial, the jealousy of several of the leading Jews was awakened, and they obliged Hyrcanus to cite him to Jerusalem to answer for his conduct before the Sanhedrim. He came arrayed in purple, with a numerous retinue, and presented to Hyrcanus a letter from Sextus Cæsar, commanding him to acquit Herod under pain of his highest displeasure. The prince, who liked Herod, was well enough inclined to this before, and the accusers were so damped by the young man's audacity, as well as by the letter, which also intimidated the Sanhedrim, that they all sat in awkward silence until one firm and honest voice, that of Sameas, was heard rebuking the members of the council for their cowardice, and predicting that the day would come when Herod would refuse them the pardon which they were then all too ready to extend to him. This was verified in the end. When Sameas had spoken, the Sanhedrim exhibited some inclination to act; but Hyrcanus adjourned the sitting, and gave Herod a hint to quit Jerusalem. He repaired to Sextus Cæsar at Damascus, and not only obtained his protection, but received from him the government of all Cœle-Syria, on condition of paying a stipulated tribute. On this Herod collected a small army, and was with difficulty dissuaded by his father and his brother Phasael from marching to Jerusalem, to avenge himself for the insult he considered he had received in being summoned before the Sanhedrim.

The assassination of Sextus Cæsar in Syria, by Bassus; and of Cæsar himself at Rome, by Brutus, Cassius, and their confederates, rekindled the flames of civil war, and might have prostrated the hopes of one less ductile than Antipater. Cassius passed over into Syria to secure that important province for the republic, and was compelled to exact heavy contributions to maintain the large army he had raised. Judea was assessed at seven hundred talents, one half of which Antipater commissioned his sons Phasael and Herod to raise, and entrusted the collection of the other half to Malichus, a Jew, one of the chief supporters of Hyrcanus. Herod won the favour of Cassius by the promptitude with which he produced his quota; but Malichus, being more dilatory, would have been put to death, had not Hyrcanus redeemed him by paying one hundred talents out of his own coffers. There was something in this affair to kindle the smouldering jealousy with which Malichus and the heads of the Jewish nation were disposed to regard the concentration of all the real power of the government in the hands of an Idumean and foreigner, as they regarded Antipater; and they plotted to destroy him and all his family. Antipater was poisoned by a glass of wine given to him at the very table of Hyrcanus: in revenge for which Phasael and Herod procured Malichus to be put to death by the Roman garrison at Tyre, in obedience to an order which they obtained from Cassius.

The influence of Antipater over Hyrcanus being now withdrawn, the adverse party soon succeeded in bringing him over to their views, by directing his fears towards the overgrown and increasing power of the sons of Antipater. Felix, the commander of the Roman forces at Jerusalem, was also led into the same views; for by this time (42 B.C.) Cassius and Brutus had been defeated and slain at Philippi by Anthony and Octavius. This party was, however, soon mastered by the brothers, who recovered Massada and all the fortresses of which it had obtained possession; and even dared to expel Felix from

Jerusalem, as the change of affairs produced by the battle of Philippi, rendered it unlikely that the now dominant avengers of Cæsar would resent the insult offered to one employed by his slayers. They upbraided Hyrcanus for favouring a party which had always sought to curb his power, which had been on all occasions supported by the sagacious and firm counsels of Antipater. A reconciliation was, however, soon effected, as Herod greatly wished to strengthen his pretensions by a marriage with Miriam, or Miriamne, the beautiful grand-daughter of the high-priest, to whom he was accordingly espoused.

But although the adverse party had been repressed, it was not extinguished; and it soon found a new head in the person of Antigonus, the surviving son of Aristobulus, whose unsuccessful application to Cæsar has lately been noticed. Nothing less was now professed than an intention to restore him to the throne of his father, his claims to which were strongly supported by some neighbouring princes, and even by the Roman governor of Damascus, who had been won by a sum of money. But when he arrived in Judea with his army, he was totally defeated by Herod, and compelled for the present to relinquish his purpose.

This was the state of affairs (41 B.C.) when, after the battle of Philippi, Mark Anthony passed into Syria, to secure that important

[Mark Anthony.]

province for the conquerors. The discontented party sent a deputation to him soon after his arrival, to complain of the sons of Antipater. But Anthony, who had been already joined by Herod, and had accepted presents from him, was indisposed towards them, especially when Herod reminded him of the services, well known to himself, which Antipater had rendered to Gabinius in the expedition to Egypt. About the same time Anthony received an embassy from Hyrcanus, touching the ransom of the inhabitants of Gophna, Emmaus, Lydda, Thamma, and some other places, whom Cassius had sold for slaves because they refused to pay their portion of the seven hundred talents which he exacted. Anthony granted the application, and notified his determination to the Tyrians, who had probably purchased most of these persons, Tyre being a great mart for slaves.

Nothing discouraged by the former neglect, one hundred Jews of the first consideration repaired to Anthony at Daphne near Antioch, to renew their complaints against Herod and Phasael. Anthony gave them an audience, and then turning to Hyrcanus, who was present, asked him, in their hearing, whom *he* esteemed most able to conduct the affairs of the government, under himself. Influenced, probably, by the recent contract of marriage between his grand-daughter and Herod, he named the two brothers, on which Anthony conferred upon them the rank and power of Tetrarchs, committed the affairs of Judea to their management, imprisoned fifteen of the deputies, and would have put them to death, had not Herod interceded for them. So things were managed in those times. With the usual pertinacity of the nation, the discontented Jews renewed the complaint at Tyre in a body of a thousand deputies; but Anthony thought proper to treat this as a tumultuous assembly, and ordered his soldiers to disperse it, which was not done without bloodshed. Anthony was then on his way to Egypt. Summoned, on his first arrival in Syria, to appear before him to account for the part she was alleged to have taken in assisting Cassius, Cleopatra had not in vain exercised upon him the fascinations by which Cæsar had before been subdued. The story of Anthony's thraldom to this charming but most unprincipled woman, is too familiar to need more than the slight allusions which the connection of this history requires. Lost in luxurious ease and dalliance, Anthony wasted much time at

Alexandria, leaving the affairs of Syria and Asia Minor to get into a state of confusion, satisfying himself that by and by he would rouse himself to some great effort which would set all right.

In the spring of the year 40 B.C. the news from both Syria and Italy compelled the warrior to break off the enchantment by which he was bound, and to look closely to his affairs. In Syria, the people, disgusted and exhausted by the successive exactions of Cassius and Anthony, refused to bear them any longer. The people of Aradus kindled the flame of opposition, by openly resisting the collectors of tribute, which example was soon followed by others. They united themselves with the Palmyrenes, and the princes whom Anthony had deposed, and called to the Parthians for aid. They gladly responded to the call, and entered the country in great numbers under the command of their king's son Pacorus, and of a Roman general (Labienus) who had belonged to the party of Pompey. The king with one division of the army took possession of Syria, while Labienus with another performed the same service elsewhere. Anthony was made perfectly acquainted with this when he reached Tyre; but the news which he also received from Italy so much more nearly concerned his personal prosperity, that he immediately embarked for that country. On his arrival, affairs between him and Octavius wore, for a time, a threatening aspect. But the opportune death of Anthony's wife Fulvia allowed an opening for intermarriages between Anthony, Octavius, and Lepidus, and peace between the triumvirs was for a time restored. They then divided the Roman empire among themselves. Anthony received Syria and the East, Lepidus obtained Africa, and Octavius all the West. 40 B.C.

Meanwhile the Parthians, having made themselves masters of Syria, as related, began to take part in the affairs of Palestine. Pacorus was induced by the offer of one thousand talents in money, *and five hundred women*, to undertake to place Antigonus on the throne of Judea. To put this contract in execution he furnished a body of soldiers, under the command of his cup-bearer, who also bore the name of Pacorus, to assist the operations of Antigonus. The united force found no effectual resistance until it reached Jerusalem, where the struggle was protracted without any decisive results. But at length it was agreed between the real belligerents to admit the Parthian commander within the city, to act as umpire between them. Phasael (the governor of Jerusalem) invited him to his own house, and allowed himself to be persuaded that the best course that could be taken would be for him and Hyrcanus to go and submit the matter in dispute to the arbitration of Barzapharnes, the Parthian governor of Syria. They went, notwithstanding the dissuasions of the less confiding Herod. Barzapharnes treated them with great attention and respect, until he supposed that sufficient time had elapsed to enable Pacorus to secure Herod at Jerusalem, when he immediately put them in chains, and shut them up in prison. But Herod, suspecting the treachery of the Parthians, withdrew with his family by night from Jerusalem, and repaired to the strong fortress of Massada, situated upon a high mountain west of the Dead Sea. On finding that Herod had escaped, the Parthians plundered the country, made ANTIGONUS king according to their contract, and departed, leaving Hyrcanus and Phasael in his hands. Phasael, feeling assured that he was doomed to death, dashed out his brains against his prison walls. The life of his aged uncle was spared by the nephew; but he cut off his ears to disqualify him from ever again acting as high-priest, and thus mutilated, sent him back to the safe keeping of the Parthians, who sent him to Seleucia on the Tigris.

In this seemingly desperate state of his affairs, for to the great body of the Jews themselves Antigonus appears to have been more acceptable than he, Herod repaired to Egypt, and took ship at Alexandria for Rome. He was warmly welcomed by Anthony, by whom he was introduced to Octavius, who was induced to notice him favourably by the report of the very great services which Antipater had rendered to his grand-uncle (and adoptive father) Cæsar, in the Egyptian expedition. The object of Herod's

journey was to induce the Romans to raise to the throne of Judea Aristobulus, the brother of his espoused Miriamne. This Aristobulus was the son of Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, by Alexander the eldest son of Aristobulus, so that he seemed to unite in his person the claims of both branches of the Asamonean family. For himself, Herod purposed to govern the country under Aristobulus, as his father had governed it under Hyrcanus. But Anthony suggested the startling idea of making Herod himself king of Judea; and noticing the eagerness with which he grasped at the glittering bait, he undertook, on the promise of a sum of money, to secure this object for him. He easily induced Octavius to concur with him; and their joint representations secured the appointment from the senate. Accordingly, during the consulship of Demetrius Calvinus and Asinius Pollio, in the one hundred and eighty-fourth Olympiad, in the year 40 B.C., the man who had a few weeks before been on the point of destroying himself from sheer despair of his fortunes, was conducted to the Capitol between the two foremost men in the world, Anthony and Octavius, and there consecrated king, with idolatrous sacrifices. All this was so soon accomplished, that Herod departed from Rome seven days after his arrival, and landed at Ptolemais only three months after his flight from Jerusalem. If the Parthians had still been in possession of Syria, it would have availed him little to have been made a king at Rome; but by the time of his return they had already been driven out of Syria by the Romans, and had withdrawn beyond the Euphrates.

Herod diligently applied himself to the collecting such a force as might enable him to relieve the friends he had left in Massada, who had all the while been closely besieged by Antigonus, and were at one time reduced to such extremities for want of water, that they had fully intended to surrender the next day, when an abundant fall of rain during the intervening night filled all the cisterns and enabled them to hold out until Herod came to their relief.

Three years elapsed before Herod can be said to have obtained possession of the throne which the Romans had given to him. The assistance which the Romans themselves rendered is of questionable value, as at first the generals appointed to assist him would only act just as money induced them; and under pretence that the forces wanted provisions, ravaged the country in such a manner as was well calculated to render his cause odious to the Jews. One good service to the land was performed in the extirpation of the numerous bands of robbers which infested Galilee, dwelling chiefly in the caverns of the hill country, and which were so numerous as sometimes to give battle to the troops in the open field. They were, however, pursued with fire and sword in all their difficult retreats, and after great numbers had been slain, the rest sought refuge beyond Jordan.

The arrival of Anthony in Syria enabled Herod to obtain more efficient assistance than before; and after having subdued the open country, he with his Roman auxiliaries, sat down before Jerusalem. During this siege he consummated his marriage with Miriamne, to whom he had four years before been betrothed. He was not only passionately attached to this lady, but he hoped that the affinity thus contracted with the Asamonean family, which was still very popular among the Jews, would conciliate the people to his government. The city held out for six months, whereby the Romans were so greatly exasperated that when at last (37 B.C.) they took it by storm, they plundered the town and massacred the inhabitants without mercy. Herod complained that they were going to make him king of a desert; and paid down a large sum of money to induce them to desist. Antigonus surrendered himself in rather a cowardly manner to the Roman general (Sosius), and, throwing himself at his feet, besought his clemency with so much abjectness, that the Roman repelled him with contempt, addressing him by the name of *Antigona*, as if unworthy a man's name. He sent him to Anthony, who at first intended to reserve him for his triumph; but being assured by Herod that while Antigonus lived the Jews generally would not acknowledge himself as king,

or cease to raise disturbances on his behalf, and this representation being backed by a sum of money, Anthony put him to death at Antioch, by the rods and the axe of the lictor—an indignity which the Romans had never before inflicted upon a crowned head. Thus ignominiously ended the dynasty of the Asamoneans, one hundred and twenty-six years after its glorious commencement.

Herod commenced his reign by cutting off all the heads of the Asamonean party, not only to secure himself in the throne, but by the confiscation of their property to enrich his coffers, which were well nigh exhausted by his profuse expenditure, and by the rapacity of the Romans. In this process all the members of the Sanhedrim perished, except Pollio and Sameas, which last, it will be remembered, had predicted this result. The ground on which *they* were spared was, that they alone had counselled submission to the course of events, by surrendering the city to Herod; whereas the others were constantly encouraging each other and the citizens in the now vain expectation that Jehovah would, as of old, interpose for the deliverance of his temple*.

* This Pollio and Sameas of Josephus are the famous Hillel and Shammai of the Rabbinical writers—two of the most eminent of the ancient doctors of the nation. Hillel was of the royal line of David, being descended from Shephatiah, David's son by Abital (1 Chron. iii. 3.) He was born in Babylonia, and came to Jerusalem in the fortieth year of his age; and for his eminence in the study of the law, he was appointed president of the Sanhedrim, forty years after, in the eightieth year of his age, and held that high station for forty years more; and it continued in his family to the tenth generation. He was succeeded by Simeon (supposed to be the same who took Christ in his arms when he was presented in the temple. Luke ii. 23—35.) His son Gamaliel was president of the Sanhedrim when Peter and the Apostles were summoned before them (Acts v. 34); "at whose feet" the Apostle Paul was "brought up," or educated, in the sect and discipline of the Pharisees (Acts xxiii. 3). He lived until within eighteen years of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the Jewish writings is distinguished by the title of Gamaliel the Old. He was succeeded by Simeon II., who perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. His son was Gamaliel II., and his again Simeon III. He was succeeded by his son, the celebrated R. Judah Hakkadosh, or "the holy," who committed the Traditional Law to writing, in the Mishna. His son and successor was Gamaliel III.; after him Judah Gemaricus; after him Hillel II., the ingenious compiler of the present Jewish Calendar, 358 A.D.

Shammai had been a disciple of Hillel, and approached the nearest to him in learning and eminence of all the Mishnical doctors. He was vice-president of the Sanhedrim, and disagreed in several points with his master. Hillel was of a mild and conciliatory temper, but Shammai of an angry and fierce spirit. Hence proceeded violent disputes and contests between the two schools, which at length ended in bloodshed. Persons acquainted with the matters in controversy between the schools of Hillel and Shammai will find various marked allusions to them in the Gospels, and, although less frequently, in the Epistles.

Herod, sensible that the Jews would not tolerate his own assumption of the high-priesthood in the room of Antigonus, designed to render that office politically insignificant, and therefore appointed to it Ananel of Babylon, an obscure priest, although descended from the ancient high-priests, and who was entirely without influence or connections to render him dangerous (36 B.C.). This appointment occasioned confusion in his own family; for Mariamne his wife, and Alexandra her mother, took umbrage at the exclusion of her brother Aristobulus—the same youth for whose brows he had originally designed the diadem which he had himself been induced to assume. Mariamne was constantly harassing him on the subject; and her mother, Alexandra, a woman of great spirit, went much further, for she complained to Cleopatra queen of Egypt by letter, and had begun to engage the interest of Anthony himself in the matter, when Herod saw that it was necessary to his domestic peace and public safety that he should depose Ananel and promote Aristobulus to his office, who was then but seventeen years of age. He was, however, so seriously displeased at the bold step which Alexandra had taken that he ordered her to be confined in her own palace, and placed around her some of his confidential servants to watch all her movements. She wrote to Cleopatra, complaining of this treatment, and in reply was advised to make her escape to Egypt. Accordingly, she arranged that herself and Aristobulus should be placed in two coffins, and carried by attached servants to the sea-coast, where a ship was waiting to receive them. But their flight was intercepted by Herod, whom, however, the fear of Cleopatra prevented from treating them with harshness. He, however, secretly resolved to put Aristobulus out of the way, as a person whose influence he had great reason to dread. This intention was strengthened when he perceived how dangerously the dis-

charge of his functions brought under the admiring notice of the Jews this beautiful fragment of the Maccabean race, in which they were delighted to trace out the noble qualities and lineaments by which that race had been distinguished. At the Feast of Tabernacles, Aristobulus officiated at the altar in the splendid robes of the high-priest, which set off to such advantage the angelic grace and beauty of his youthful person, that the Jews could not contain themselves, but gave vent to the most lively demonstrations of their admiration and love. This sealed his doom. Soon after, Herod engaged Aristobulus, with suitable companions of his own age, in a variety of sports and entertainments at Jericho. Among other things they bathed in a lake, where the young men kept immersing Aristobulus, as if in sport, until he was drowned. Loud were the lamentations of Herod at this most unhappy "accident." By these, and by the grand funeral with which he honoured the remains of Aristobulus, and by the trophies with which he surcharged his tomb, he sought to disguise from the people the real character of this transaction. But they were not deceived. The deed inspired the whole nation with hatred and horror, which even his own family shared. As to Alexandra, her emotions were so overpowering that only the hope of vengeance enabled her to live.

Old Hyrcanus was at this time in Jerusalem. He had been, and might have remained, very happily situated at Seleucia, where he was treated by the Jews in that quarter, *who were more numerous and more wealthy* than those of Judea, as their king and high-priest, in which point of view he was also considered and respected by the Parthian king. But when the fears and suspicions of Herod extended even to him, and, desiring to get him into his own power, he sent and invited him to come and spend the evening of his days in his own land and with his own family, and engaged the Parthian king to permit him to do so, Hyrcanus, who liked Herod, and had great confidence in his gratitude, could not be dissuaded by the earnest remonstrances and entreaties of his eastern friends, but returned to Jerusalem, where he was well received, and, until a more convenient season, treated by Her with attention and respect.

Anthony was now again in Syria, and his arrival had invited Cleopatra to join h at Laodicea. Alexandra again applied Cleopatra; and she took much interest the matter—not from any strong natural feelings—for she had herself committed crimes as great, but in the hope of inducing Anthony to add Judea to her dominions if Herod were disgraced. She therefore brought the affair under the notice of Anthony; and as he could not but remember that Herod had originally sought for the murdered youth the crown he now wore himself, he was induced to summon him to Laodicea to answer for his conduct. Herod was obliged to obey, and was not without anxiety for the result. He however took care so to propitiate Anthony beforehand by the profusion of his gifts, that on his arrival he was immediately acquitted, and the avarice of Cleopatra was in some degree appeased by the assignment of Cœle-Syria to her, in lieu of Judea, of which she had always been, and soon again became covetous, 34 B.C.

Before his departure from Jerusalem, Herod, uncertain of the result, had left private instructions with his uncle Joseph (who had married his sister Salome) to put Mariamne to death in case he was condemned, for he knew that Anthony had heard much of her extreme beauty, and feared that he might take her to himself, after his death Joseph had the great imprudence to divulge this secret to Mariamne herself, representing it, however, as resulting from the excess of her husband's love to her. But she rather regarded it as a proof of so savage a nature, that she conceived an unconquerable repugnance towards him. Soon after a rumour came that he had been put to death by Anthony; on which Alexandra, who was now also acquainted with the barbarous orders left with Joseph, was preparing to seek protection with the Roman legion stationed in the city, when letters from Herod, announcing his acquittal and speedy return, induced Joseph and Salome to relinquish their design The firebrand of the family was Salome, th

sister of Herod, and she failed not to apprise her brother of this intention, as well as to insinuate that too close an intimacy had subsisted between Mariamne and Joseph. Salome had been, it seems, provoked to hatred of this high-born lady by the hauteur with which she had been looked down upon and treated as an inferior by her. Although struck with jealousy, the king allowed his deep love for Mariamne to subdue him, when all her beauty shone once more upon him. He could only bring himself to question her gently, and was satisfied from her answers, and from the conscious innocence of her manner, that she had been maligned. Afterwards, while assuring her of the sincerity and ardour of his love towards her, she tauntingly reminded him of the proof of *that* which he had given in his orders to Joseph. This most imprudent disclosure rekindled all the jealousy of Herod. Convinced that the charge which he had heard was true, he flung her from his arms; Joseph he ordered to be put to death, without admitting him to his presence; and although his love for Mariamne at this time restrained his rage against her, he put her mother Alexandra into custody, as the cause of all these evils.

The disgraceful history of Anthony in Egypt is familiar to the reader; and it is only needful to advert to one or two points in which Herod and Palestine were more or less involved.

In 33 B.C. Jerusalem was "honoured" with a visit from Cleopatra, on her return from the banks of the Euphrates, whither she had accompanied Anthony on his Armenian expedition. Before this she had succeeded in persuading Anthony, although he steadily refused wholly to sacrifice Herod to her ambition, to give her the fertile territories around Jericho, the celebrated balsam afforded by which, together with the palm-trees in which it abounded, furnished a considerable revenue, the deprivation of which could not but have given great offence to Herod. The means which this abandoned woman used, during her stay at Jerusalem, to bring the king under the spell of those fascinations for which, more than for her beauty, she was celebrated, added, in his mind, disgust and contempt to the sense of wrong; and although he received and entertained her with the most sedulous attention and apparent respect, he had it seriously in consideration whether, seeing she was wholly in his power, he could safely compass the death of one who had more than once endeavoured to accomplish his own. The dread of Anthony's vengeance deterred him, and he conducted the queen with honour to the frontiers of her own kingdom, after having endeavoured to propitiate her cupidity by ample gifts. But nothing could satiate her thirst for gain and aggrandisement, and her plots to gain possession of Judea were continued, and could hardly have been defeated by a less accomplished master in her own arts than Herod "the Great." One time she engaged Anthony to commit to him a hazardous war on her account with the Arabian king reigning in Petra, calculating that the death of either of them would enable her to appropriate his dominions. Herod gained one battle; but he lost another through the defection of the Egyptian general at a critical moment of the conflict. Herod was, however, ultimately successful, and won great honour by a signal and effective victory, which brought the Arabians of Seir under his dominion.

The same year (31 B.C.) had opened with an earthquake so tremendous as had never before been known in Judea: it is said that not fewer than thirty thousand persons were either swallowed up in the chasms which opened in the earth, or destroyed by the fall of their houses. The confusion and loss which this calamity occasioned greatly troubled the king, and not long after he found (as far as his own interests were concerned) a more serious matter of anxiety in the result of the battle of Actium (Sept. 2nd, 31 B.C.), when Octavius obtained a decided victory over Anthony, who fled to Egypt, as his last retreat. Herod did not exhibit any blameworthy alacrity in abandoning the patron of his fortunes. He sent by a special messenger to exhort him to put to immediate death the woman who had been his ruin, seize her treasures and king-

dom, and thus obtain means of raising another army, with which either once more to contend for empire, or at least to secure a more advantageous peace than he could otherwise expect. But finding that Anthony paid no heed to this proposal, and neglected his own offers of service, he thought it was high time to take care of himself, by detaching his fortunes from one whose utter ruin he saw to be inevitable. Therefore, when Octavius early in 30 B.C. had come to Rhodes, on his way to Egypt, he went thither to him.

But before his departure he made such arrangements as showed, after his own peculiar manner, the sense he entertained of the serious importance of the present contingencies. He placed his mother, sister, wives, and children in the strong fortress of Massada, under the care of his brother Pheroras. But seeing that Mariamne and her mother Alexandra could not agree with his mother and sister, he placed them separately in the fortress of Alexandrium, under the care of a trusty Idumean named Sohemus, with secret orders to put them both to death if Octavius should treat him harshly; and that, in concurrence with Pheroras, he should endeavour to secure the crown for his children. And, fearful that the existence and presence of Hyrcanus might suggest the obvious course of deposing himself and restoring the original occupant of the throne, he was glad of the opportunity of putting him to death, with the faint show of justice which might be derived from the detected design of the old man (instigated by his daughter Alexandra) to make his escape to the Arabian king Malchus, the most active of Herod's foreign enemies, and the son of that king Aretas who had formerly invaded Judea for the purpose of restoring Hyrcanus to the throne which his brother had usurped. Hyrcanus was eighty years of age when he was thus made to experience the heartless ingratitude of the man who owed life and all things to his favour.

On his arrival at Rhodes, Herod conducted himself with the tact of no common man. When admitted to an audience, he frankly acknowledged all he had done for Anthony, and all he would still have done had his services been accepted. He even stated the last counsel which he had given to that infatuated man; and having thus enabled Octavius to judge how faithful he was to his friends, he offered to him that friendship which the conduct of Anthony left him free to offer. Octavius was charmed by this manly frankness; and, mindful of Antipater's services to Julius Cæsar, and of the part which he had himself taken in placing Herod on the throne, his overtures were received with pleasure, and he was directed again to take up and wear on his head the diadem which he had laid aside when he entered the presence. By this significant intimation he was confirmed in his kingdom; and then and after he was treated with a degree of consideration not usually paid to tributary kings.

Meanwhile Mariamne had, by her address, managed to extract from Sohemus the acknowledgment of the last directions concerning her which he had received from Herod. The consequence was that, although she concealed her knowledge of the fact, she received him on his return with coldness and dislike, which offended him highly; and, presuming on the depth of his affection for her, she continued long to maintain a degree of haughtiness and reserve which greatly aggravated his displeasure. After Herod had been fluctuating for a whole year between love and resentment, Mariamne one day brought matters to a crisis by her pointed refusal to receive his love, and by her upbraiding him with the murder of her grandfather and brother. Enraged beyond further endurance, Herod immediately ordered her confidential eunuch to be put to the torture, that he might discover the cause of her altered conduct; but the tortured wretch could only say that it probably arose from some communication which Sohemus had made to her. This hint sufficed; as he concluded that Sohemus must have been too intimate with her, or that he would not have revealed the secret with which he had been entrusted. Sohemus was immediately seized and put to death; Mariamne herself was then accused by Herod of adul-

tery before judges of his own selection, by whom she was condemned, but with a conviction that their sentence of death would not be executed. Neither would it, probably, but for the intervention of Cypros, the mother of Herod, and Salome his sister, who, fearing he might relent, suggested that by delay occasion for a popular commotion in her favour might be given. She was therefore led to immediate execution, and met her death with the firmness which became her race, although assailed on the way by the violent and indecent reproaches of her own mother, Alexandra, who now began to be seriously alarmed for her own safety. She, however, did not long escape; for, when Herod fell sick the next year (28 B.C.) from the poignancy of his remorse and anguish at the loss of Mariamne, she laid a plot for seizing the government; but it was disclosed to Herod by the officers whose fidelity she endeavoured to corrupt, and he instantly ordered her to be put to death.

We must return to an earlier year, to notice that Octavius passed through Syria on his way to Egypt, and that Herod went to meet him at Ptolemais, where he entertained him and his army with the most profuse magnificence. Besides this he presented

[Cleopatra.]

the emperor with eight hundred talents, and furnished large supplies of bread, wine, and other provisions, for the march through the desert, where the army might have been much distressed for the want of such necessaries. He accompanied the army himself through the desert to Pelusium. On the return of Octavius the same way, after the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, and the reduction of Egypt to the condition of a Roman province, he was received and entertained with the same truly royal liberality and magnificence, by which he was so gratified that, in return, he presented Herod with the four thousand Gauls who had formed the body-guard of Cleopatra, and also restored to him the districts and towns of which the principality had been divested by Pompey and Anthony.

In 27 B.C., four years after the battle of Actium, Octavius received from the flattery of the senate the name—or rather the title which became a name—of Augustus, and

[Augustus.]

with it all the powers of the state. That he might not, however, seem to assume all the authority to himself, he divided the empire into two parts; the quiet and peaceable portions he assigned to the senate, to be governed by consular and prætorian officers; these were called *senatorial;* but the turbulent and insecure provinces which lay on the outskirts of the empire, he reserved for himself; these were called *imperial*, and were governed by presidents and procurators. This was one of the strokes of deep statesmanship which distinguish the history of Augustus Cæsar, for under the appearance of leaving to the senate the most settled and easily governed provinces, he secured in his own hands the whole military power of the empire, which was necessarily stationed in the comparatively unsettled imperial provinces to retain them in subjection—such as Egypt, *Syria*, Phœnicia, Cilicia, and Cyprus, in the east, and Spain, in the west.

In the year 25 B.C. Herod found an opportunity of cutting off the last branch of the Asamonean race. His turbulent sister Sa-

lome, having fallen out with her second husband Costabarus, the governor of Idumea and Gaza, she took the liberty of sending him a bill of divorce, in conformity with the Roman customs, but contrary to the Mosaical law and usage, which confined that privilege to her husband*; and she then returned to her brother, before whom she cunningly ascribed her conduct to the fact that Costabarus, in conjunction with some chiefs of the Asamonean party, had entered into a conspiracy against him. In proof of this, she stated that he kept in concealment the sons of Babas, whom Herod had, at the taking of Jerusalem, entrusted to him to be destroyed. The sons of Babas were found in the retreat indicated by Salome, and put to death; and, taking all the rest for granted, the king ordered Costabarus and his alleged associates to be immediately executed.

The Asamonean family being now extirpated root and branch, and no person being in existence whose claims to the throne could be considered superior to his own, Herod ventured to manifest a greater disregard for the law of Moses, and more attachment to heathenish customs than he had previously deemed safe. He began by abolishing some of the ceremonies which the former required, and by introducing not a few of the latter. He then proceeded to build a magnificent theatre in the city, and a spacious amphitheatre in the suburbs, where he instituted public games, which were celebrated every fifth year in honour of Augustus. In order to draw the larger concourse on these occasions, proclamation of the approaching games was made, not only in his own dominions, but in neighbouring provinces and distant kingdoms. Gladiators, wrestlers, and musicians were invited from all parts of the world, and prizes of great value were proposed to the victors. These games, and more especially the combats between men and wild beasts, were highly displeasing to the Jews; who also viewed with a jealous eye the trophies with which the places of public entertainment were adorned, regarding them as coming within the interdiction of idolatrous images by the Mosaical law. In vain did Herod endeavour to overcome their dislike. Connected with other causes of discontent, old and new, it increased daily, and at last grew to such a height that ten of the most zealous malcontents, including one blind man, formed a conspiracy, and assembled, with daggers concealed under their garments, for the purpose of assassinating Herod when he entered the theatre. They had brought their minds to a state of indifference to the result; for they were persuaded that if they failed, their death could not but render the tyrant more odious to the people, and thus equally work out the object they sought. Nor were they quite mistaken. Their design *was* discovered; and they were put to death with the most cruel tortures. But when the mob indicated their view of the matter—their hatred of himself, and sympathy with the intended assassins—by literally tearing the informer in pieces, and throwing his flesh to the dogs, Herod was exasperated to the uttermost. By torture, he compelled some women to name the principal persons who were concerned in this transaction, all of whom were hurried off to instant death *together with their innocent families.* This crowning act of savageness rendered the tyrant so perfectly detestable to his subjects, that he began very seriously to contemplate the possibility of a general revolt, and to take his measures accordingly. He built new fortresses and fortified towns throughout the land, and strengthened those that previously existed. In this he did more than the original inducement required; for Herod was a man of taste, and had quite a passion for building and improvements, so that in the course of his long reign the country assumed a greatly improved appearance, through the number of fine towns and magnificent public works and buildings which he erected. In this respect there had been no king like him since Solomon; and if *he could* have reigned in peace, if domestic troubles, opposition from his subjects, and the connection with the Romans, had not called into active operation all the darker features of his character, it is easy to conceive that his reign might have been very happy and glorious.

* Deut. xxiv. 1, 2, &c.; Matt. v. 31; xix. 7.

He rebuilt Samaria, or rather completed the rebuilding of it which Gabinius had begun. His attention seems to have been drawn to its excellent site and strong military position; and from the magnificent scale on which it was restored, we conceive that he contemplated the possibility of withdrawing his court to it, in the very likely contingency of being unable to maintain himself at Jerusalem. He gave the completed city the name of *Sebaste*, the name, in Greek, of his great patron *Augustus*. He also built Gaba in Galilee, and Heshbon in Perea; besides many others which he called by the names of the different members of his own family, as—Antipatris, from the name of his father Antipater; Cypron, near Jericho, after his mother Cypros (who was descended from an Arabian family, although born at Ascalon in Palestine); and Phasaelis, in the plains of Jericho, after his brother Phasael. In most of these cities he planted colonies of his foreign soldiers to hold the country in subjection.

To extend his fame Herod even built numerous splendid edifices, and made large improvements in cities beyond the limits of his own dominion—such as gymnasiums at Ptolemais, Tripolis, and Damascus; the city walls at Bibulus; porticoes, or covered walls at Tyre, Beyrutus, and Antioch; bazaars and theatres at Zidon and Damascus; an aqueduct at Laodicea on the sea; and baths, reservoirs, and porticoes at Ascalon. He also made groves in several cities; to others he made rich presents, or furnished endowments for the support of their games; and by such means his fame was widely spread in the Roman empire.

At Jerusalem Herod built himself a splendid palace, on Mount Zion, the site of the original fortress of Jebus, and of the citadel which had so much annoyed the Jews during the Maccabean wars. It was in the Grecian style of architecture, and two large and sumptuous apartments in it Herod named Cæsareum, in honour of the emperor, and Agrippeum, after his favourite Agrippa.

We receive a better idea of the largeness of Herod's views, however, by his building the town and forming the harbour at what he named Cæsarea. The site had formerly been marked by a castle called Strato's tower, on the coast between Dora and Joppa. Here he made the most convenient and safest port to be found on all the coast of Phœnicia and Palestine by running out a vast semi-circular mole or breakwater, of great depth and extent, into the sea, so as to form a spacious and secure harbour against the stormy winds from the south and west, leaving only an entrance into it from the north. This soon became a noted point of departure from and entrance into Palestine, and as such is often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. It also acquired a new importance as the seat of government, after Judea became an imperial province, Cæsarea being then the usual residence of the procurator.

In the year 22 B.C. the want of the usual rains in Syria and Palestine produced a severe famine, which was followed by a pestilence that carried off great multitudes of the people. Herod behaved nobly on this occasion. He exhausted his treasury, and even the silver plate of his table, in purchasing provisions from Egypt, and in buying wool for clothing, as most of the sheep of the country had been slaughtered in the dearth. This bounty was not confined to his own dominions, but extended to the neighbouring Syrians. By this conduct so much of gratitude and kind feeling towards him was produced, as only the continued and growing tyranny of his subsequent reign could obliterate.

The next year Herod contracted a marriage with another Mariamne, the daughter of the priest Simon. To pave the way for this alliance the king removed the existing high-priest, Jesus, the son of Phabet, and invested the father of Mariamne with that once high office. Herod next began to build a castle, which he called Herodium, on a small round hill, near the place where he repulsed the Parthians, under the cupbearer Pacorus, when they pursued him on his flight from Jerusalem. The situation and the protection which the castle offered were so inviting that numbers of opulent people began to build themselves houses around, so that in a short time the spot was occupied by a fair city.

About this time Herod might be deemed

to have attained the summit of all his wishes. Strong in the favour of the emperor, he was feared, if not loved, by the people under his rule, and respected by the Roman governors, and by the neighbouring princes and kings. Of the favour and confidence of Augustus he received proofs which were of high value to him. As a reward for his services in clearing the country of robbers, the valuable districts of Trachonitis, Auranitis, and Batanea, beyond Jordan, were added to his dominion; and, what was perhaps more for his personal influence and honour, he was soon after named the emperor's procurator in Syria, and orders were given to the governor of that great province to undertake nothing of importance without his knowledge and advice. Herod also procured from the emperor the dignity of a tetrarch for his only surviving brother, Pheroras; for Herod himself had given him a territory in Perea, beyond Jordan, with a revenue of one hundred talents, in order that he might live in a style suitable to his birth, without being dependent on the king's successor. As some acknowledgment for all these favours Herod built a temple of white marble at Paneas (Banias, the sources of the Jordan), and dedicated it to Augustus. But this act, and others of a similar character, were so highly offensive to the Jews that, to pacify them, Herod was obliged to remit a portion of their tribute.

It seems likely that the reflections made upon his conduct, in building heathen temples, first drew his attention to the condition of JEHOVAH'S temple at Jerusalem, which, in the lapse of time, had gone much out of repair, and had sustained great damage during the civil wars. He was then led to form the bold design of pulling it down, and rebuilding it entirely on a more magnificent scale. To this he was induced, not only from the magnificence of his ideas, his love of building, and the desire of fame, but also to conciliate the good opinion of his discontented subjects, and create a new interest in the continuance of his life and welfare.

Herod made his proposal in a general assembly of the people at Jerusalem, probably at the passover, in the year 19 B.C., the eighteenth of his reign. The people were much startled by the offer. They recognised the grandeur of the undertaking, and the need and benefit of it; but they were fearful that after he had taken down the old building he might be unable or unwilling to build the new. To meet this objection Herod undertook not to demolish the old temple until *all* the materials required for the new one were collected on the spot; and on these terms his offer was accepted, with as much satisfaction as the Jews were capable of deriving from any of *his* acts. Herod kept his word. A thousand carts were speedily at work in drawing stones and materials, ten thousand of the most skilful workmen were brought together, and a thousand priests were so far instructed in masonry and carpentry as might enable them to expedite and superintend the work. After two years had been spent in these preparations the old temple was pulled down, and the new one commenced in the year 17 B.C. And with such vigour was the work carried on that the Sanctuary, or, in effect, the proper temple, was finished in a year and a half, and the rest of the temple, containing the outer buildings, colonnades, and porticoes, in eight years more, so as to be then fit for divine service, according to the king's intention, 7 B.C. But the expense of finishing and adorning the whole continued to be long after carried on from the sacred treasury, until the fatal government of Gessius Florus, in the year 62 A.D. Hence during the ministry of Christ (28 A.D.) the Jews said to him, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" (John ii. 20.)

By the first Mariamne Herod had two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he sent to be educated at Rome, where they remained three years, under the immediate inspection of Augustus, who had kindly lodged them in his own palace. Two years after the foundation of the temple Herod went to Rome himself, to pay his respects to the emperor, and take back to Judea his sons, whose education was now complete. He was received with unusual friendliness by Augustus, and was entertained with much distinction during his stay. Soon after his return he married

the elder of the brothers to Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and the younger to Berenice, the daughter of his own notorious sister, Salome. Now it happened that both the young men inherited a full share of the pride and hauteur of their mother Mariamne, and were disposed to look down upon all the connections of their father. That they ever entertained any designs against him is not probable; but it is very probable, from their conduct, that, apart from their respect for him, they deemed their right to the crown irrefragable, derived from their mother rather than from him, and, in point of fact, much greater than his own. By corrupting her own daughter, who was married to one of the brothers, Salome made herself acquainted with their more private sentiments, and learned that their sympathies leaned all to the side of their murdered mother, and that in their own domestic circles they spoke with strong abhorrence of the authors of her undeserved and untimely death, and lamented the various acts of cruelty of which their father had been guilty. This was enough to determine Salome to accomplish their ruin, as she saw clearly that, if ever they possessed power, she was likely to suffer for the part she had taken in compassing the death of Mariamne. She was also envious of their popularity, for the very same feeling which inclined them to rest upon their connection with the Asamonean dynasty inclined the Jews to regard them with peculiar interest and favour as the last relics of that illustrious house. Salome, therefore, took every occasion of prejudicing Herod against his sons, and of turning his paternal love and pride into jealousy and dislike. To this end, indeed, little more was needed than to make known to him, with some exaggeration, the true state of their feelings.

The first measure which Herod took to check the pride of the two brothers was, three years after his return (13 B.C.), to bring to court his eldest son, Antipater, whom he had by his first wife Doris, while he was in a private station, and whom he had divorced on his marriage with Mariamne. But this measure, intended to teach them wholesome caution, only operated in provoking Alexander and Aristobulus to greater discontent and more intemperate language than before. In fact, they had almost insensibly become the heads of the Asamonean party, still very powerful in the country, and were urged on by the necessities of that position, and by the conviction that the popular feeling was entirely on their side. As to Antipater, he had all the ambition of his father, with all the artfulness of his aunt. Openly he seemed to advocate the cause of the brothers, and to extenuate their indiscretions, while he took care to surround the king with persons who reported to him all their sayings with the most invidious aggravations. By this means the affection with which Herod had regarded the brothers, not only for their own noble qualities, but for their mother's sake, was alienated from them and fixed upon Antipater. Him the father at length recommended to Augustus as his successor, and obtained from him authority to leave the crown to him in the first instance, and afterwards to the sons of Mariamne, 11 B.C.

The curious reader will find in Josephus a full account of all the various plots which were laid by Antipater, assisted by his aunt Salome and his uncle Pheroras, to bring about the destruction of the young princes. This they at last effected by a false charge that they designed to poison their father. On this he brought them to trial before a council held at Beyrutus, at which the Roman governors Saturnius and Volumnius presided, and where Herod pleaded in person against his sons with such vehemence that he, with some difficulty, procured their condemnation, although nothing could be clearly proved against them but an intention to withdraw to some foreign country, where they might live in peace. The time and the mode of putting the sentence into execution were left to the king's own discretion. This was not until he came to Sebaste, where, in a fit of rage, produced in the same manner and through the same agencies as his previous treatment of these unfortunate young men, he ordered them to be strangled, 6 B.C. In these two unfortunate brothers the

noble family of the Asamoneans may be said to have become utterly extinct.

It was somewhat before this time that Herod, being greatly in want of money, bethought himself of opening the tomb of David, having probably heard the story of the treasure which the first Hyrcanus was reported to have found there. As might be expected, he discovered nothing but the royal ornaments with which the king had been buried.

In the spring of the year 5 B.C. the birth of the great Harbinger, John the Baptist, announced the approach of ONE greater than he, whose sandal-thong he, thereafter, declared himself unworthy to unloose.

At and for some time before the date to which we are now arrived the relations of Herod with Rome had become more unpleasant than at any former period. Not long before he put Alexander and Aristobulus to death Herod had a quarrel with Obadas, king of Arabia, which led him to march some troops into that country, and to the defeat of the banded robbers, against whom chiefly he acted, and of a party of Arabs who came to their relief. This affair was reported to Augustus in such a manner as raised his wrath against Herod; and attending only to the fact that Herod *had* marched a military force into Arabia, which Herod's friends could not deny, he, without inquiring into the provocation and circumstances, wrote to Herod a very severe letter; the substance of which was, that *he had hitherto treated him as a friend, but should henceforth treat him as a subject.* Herod sent an embassy to clear himself, but Augustus repeatedly refused to listen to them; and so the king was obliged for a time to submit to all the injurious treatment which the emperor thought proper to inflict. The chief of these was the degrading his kingdom to a Roman province. For soon after Josephus incidentally mentions that "the whole nation took an oath of fidelity to Cæsar, and to the king jointly, except six thousand of the Pharisees, who, through their hostility to the regal government, refused to take it, and were fined for their refusal by the king; but the wife of his brother Pheroras paid the fine for them."

As this was shortly before the death of Pheroras himself, it coincides with the time of this decree for the enrolment of which St. Luke (ii. 1) makes mention; and we may, therefore, certainly infer that the oath was administered at the same time, according to the usage of the Roman census, in which a return of persons' ages and properties was required to be made upon oath, under penalty of the confiscation of the goods of the delinquents. And the reason for registering *ages* was that, among the Syrians, males from fourteen years of age and females from twelve, until their sixty-fifth year, were subject to a capitation or poll-tax by the Roman law. This tax was two *drachmæ* a head, or half a *stater*, equal to fifteen pence of our money*.

Cyrenius, a Roman senator and procurator, or collector of the emperor's revenue, was employed to make the enrolment. This person, whom Tacitus calls Quirinus, and describes as "an active soldier and rigid commissioner," was well qualified for an employment so odious to Herod and to his subjects, and probably came to execute the decree with an armed force. By the wary policy of the Romans, to prevent insurrection as well as to expedite business, all were required to repair to their own cities. Even in Italy the consular edict commanded the Latin citizens not to be enrolled at Rome, but all in their own cities. And this precaution was of course more necessary in such turbulent provinces as Judea and Galilee†.

The decree was peremptory, and admitted of no delay; therefore, in the autumn of the year 5, of the popular era Before Christ‡,

* See the case of Christ, and Peter afterwards, where "*a stater*," the amount for *both*, was procured by miracle. Matt. xvii. 24—27.

† For this clear view of the somewhat perplexed subject of the *Census* alluded to by St. Luke, we are indebted to Dr. Hales, from whose excellent 'Analysis of Chronology' we have, indeed, obtained much and various aid in the present book of our history.

‡ That the birth of Christ is thus given to the autumn of the year 5 *before* Christ, is an apparent anomaly, which may require a few words of explanation. The Era of the Birth of Christ was not in use until 532 A.D., in the time of Justinian, when it was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by birth, and a Roman abbot; and which only began to prevail in the West about the time of Charles Martel and Pope Gregory II., 730 A.D. It has long been agreed by *all* chronologers that Dionysius made a mistake in placing the birth of Christ some years too late; but the amount of the difference has been variously estimated, at

a carpenter of Nazareth in Galilee, by name Joseph, journeyed with his wife Mary, although she was then large with child, to Bethlehem in Judea, that being their paternal city, as they were both "of the race and lineage of David." They were not among the first comers, and the place was so thronged that they could not find room even in the lodging-rooms of the caravanserai of Bethlehem, but were obliged to seek shelter in the stables of the same. Here the woman was taken in labour, and gave birth to a male child. That child, thus humbly born, was the long-promised "Desire of Nations," the "Saviour of the World"—JESUS CHRIST. Nor did he come sooner than he was expected. The Jews expected anxiously, and from day to day, the Great Deliverer, of whom their prophets had spoken; and the precise forecalculations of the prophet Daniel had given them to know that the time of his coming was near. This indeed partly explains the uneasy relations between Herod and his subjects, and the distaste of the latter to the kingship which he had taken. For they wanted no king, until their king Messiah should come to take the throne of his father David, and lead them forth, conquering and to conquer, breaking the nations in pieces, as an iron rod breaks the vessels of the potter, and bringing all the Gentiles to their feet. Full of these magnificent ideas of their king Messiah, they failed to recognise the promised Deliverer in One who came to deliver them, not from the Romans, but from their sins; whose kingdom was not to be of this world, and who was to reign, not over lands and territories, but in the hearts of men.

Nor was he expected only by the Jews. He was the "Desire of *Nations*." There were strong pulsations of the universal heart, in expectation of some great change,—of the advent of some distinguished personage who should bring in a new order of things of some kind or other, and who should work such deeds and establish such dominion as never before existed. It was even expected that this great personage should issue from Judea; an expectation which was probably derived from the more distinct anticipations of the Jews, if not partly from a remote glimpse at the meaning of those prophecies which referred to Messiah, and which many educated persons must have read in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. But the expectations which the nations entertained were, like those of the Jews, connected with dreams of a universal temporal empire which the expected Messiah was to establish. As, however, they had not the strong national interest in the expectation of a conquering king, they clung with less tenacity than the Jews to this notion of his functions, although, blinded by it, they were for a while as unable as the Hebrews to recognise the ANOINTED OF GOD in the infant of Bethlehem.

The prevalence and character of this expectation account for the watchfulness of Herod, and for the horrible promptitude with which he ordered the massacre of *all* the infants of Bethlehem as soon as the inquiries of the Parthian magi gave him cause to suspect that THE KING OF THE JEWS had been born there.

The object of the present work is not the history of Jesus Christ, or of his ministry, or of the introduction of the Christian system, but the public history of the Jewish people. There are points, indeed, to which it will be necessary to advert, and the coincidence of events will be indicated by the chronological table (taken, with some improvement, from Hales) which we introduce below *.

	B.C.
* John the Baptist born about spring	5
Roman enrolment by Cyrenius	—
Nativity of JESUS CHRIST about autumn	—
Christ presented in the Temple	—
Visit of the Parthian magi to Jerusalem	4
Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt	—
Massacre of the infants at Bethlehem	—
Death of Herod about spring	—

two, three, four, five, or even eight years. The most general conclusion is that which is adopted in our Bibles, and which places the birth of Christ four years before the common era, or more probably a few months more, according to the conclusion of Hales, which we have deemed it proper to adopt. The grounds of this conclusion are largely and ably stated in the 'Analysis,' vol. i. p. 83—93. As to the day, it appears that the 25th of December was not fixed upon till the time of Constantine, in the fourth century, although there was an early tradition in its favour. It is probable that it really took place about or at the Feast of Tabernacles (say the autumnal equinox) of 5 B.C., or at the Passover (say the vernal equinox) of 4 B.C. The former is the opinion of Hales and others, and the latter of Archbishop Usher and our Bibles.

But we must throughout assume that the reader is familiar with the circumstantial details which are embodied in the simple and authentic narratives of the holy Evangelists,

	B.C.
Archelaus ethnarch of Judea	4
Passover, April 12	—
	A.D.
Archelaus deposed, and Judea made a Roman province	6
The assessment, or taxing, made by Cyrenius the governor of Syria	—
Ananus or Annas made high-priest	—
Coponius, the first procurator of Judea	—
Christ visits the Temple in his twelfth year	8
Marcus Ambivius, the second procurator	9
Tiberius, joint emperor with Augustus	12
Annius Rufus, third procurator	13
Death of Augustus, Aug. 19	14
Valerius Gratus, fourth procurator, eleven years	—
Ishmael, high-priest	21
Eleazer, son of Annas, high-priest	22
Simon, son of Camith, high-priest	23
Joseph Caiaphas, high-priest, eleven years	24
Pontius Pilate, fifth procurator, ten years	25
John the Baptist begins his ministry about autumn	26
Christ baptized near autumn, being about thirty years of age	27
Temptation in the wilderness forty days	—
Disciples chosen—John i. 37—52	—
First miracle at Cana in Galilee	—
I. PASSOVER	28
Christ visits and purges the Temple	—
Opens his ministry in Judea	—
John the Baptist imprisoned by Herod Antipas	28
Christ's ministry in Galilee	—
Sermon on the Mount	—
II. PASSOVER	29
Twelve apostles sent to proclaim Christ	—
John beheaded	—
III. PASSOVER	30
Seventy disciples sent to proclaim Christ	—
Christ's Transfiguration	—
IV. PASSOVER	31
Christ's Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension	—
Church of Christ founded at Pentecost	—
Martyrdom of Stephen, about autumn	34
Paul's Conversion and ministry	35
Marcellus, sixth procurator	—
Marullus, seventh procurator	36
Jewish embassy to Caligula	40
Herod Agrippa, king of Judea	41
Martyrdom of James the Elder	44
Famine in Judea in the reign of Claudius	—
Cuspius Fadius, eighth procurator	—
Tiberius Alexander, ninth procurator	46
Ventidius Cumanus, tenth procurator	47
First Christian Council at Jerusalem	49
Felix, eleventh procurator, ten years	52
Paul imprisoned at Jerusalem	59
Porcius Festus, twelfth procurator	61
Paul's first visit to Rome	—
Albinus, thirteenth procurator	63
Gessius Florus, fourteenth procurator	64
Paul's second visit to Rome	—
The Jewish war begins	65
Martyrdom of Peter and Paul	—
First Roman persecution of the Church	—
Vespasian invades Judea	68
Titus destroys Jerusalem	70

and in the supplementary accounts which St. Luke has supplied in the Acts of the Apostles.

The census, which was begun by Cyrenius, was not completed to the extent originally contemplated, for Herod found means to disabuse Augustus of the impression under which he had acted, and was restored to the imperial favour and confidence. To make him some amends, the emperor was disposed to have consigned to him the forfeited kingdom of the Nabathæans; but the painful disagreements and atrocities in the family of Herod were about the same time brought so conspicuously under his notice, that, with his usual sagacity, he doubted the wisdom of committing the conquest and government of a new kingdom to an old man who had proved himself incapable of ruling his own house.

We have before incidentally mentioned the part which was taken by the wife of Pheroras, in paying the fines of the Pharisees who refused to take the oath required of all the people. In consequence of this, many of that powerful body began to whisper that God would give the kingdom to Pheroras; on which account Herod caused several Pharisees and some members of his own family to be executed. Further, regarding the wife of Pheroras as the cause of all this trouble, he very peremptorily required him to divorce her. His brother replied that nothing but death should separate him from his wife, and retired in disgust to Perea, in his own territory beyond Jordan. Thus was quite destroyed the good understanding which had for so many years subsisted between the two brothers. Blinded by resentment, Pheroras readily came into the plans of Antipater: and between them it was settled that Herod should be taken off by poison; that Antipater should sit on his throne; and that meanwhile he should contrive to be sent to Rome, to preclude any suspicion of his part in the transaction. This plot would probably have succeeded but for the death of Pheroras himself, which led to the discovery of the whole, and even made known to Herod the part which Antipater had taken in compassing the death of the

two sons of the first Mariamne. It appeared also that the second Mariamne was a party in this conspiracy, in consequence of which she was divorced, the name of her son was struck out of the king's will, and her father, the high-priest Simon, was deposed from his office, which was given to Matthias the son of Theophilus. On these disclosures, Herod managed to get Antipater back from Rome without allowing him to become acquainted with what had transpired. On his arrival he was formally accused before Quintilius Varus, the prefect of Syria, who was then at Jerusalem, and was imprisoned until the affair should have been submitted to the judgment of Augustus.

Meanwhile Herod, then in the sixty-ninth year of his age, fell ill of that grievous disease of which he died, and which, by some singular dispensation of Providence, appears to have been the peculiar lot of tyrannous and proud sovereigns, and which rendered him wretched in himself and a terror to all around him. A report got into circulation that his disease afforded no chance of his recovery, in consequence of which a dangerous tumult was excited by two celebrated doctors, named Judas and Matthias, who instigated their disciples to pull down and destroy a golden eagle of large size and exquisite workmanship, which had been placed over one of the gates of the temple. Scarcely had this rash act been completed, when the royal guards appeared and seized the two leaders and forty of their most zealous disciples. Some of them were burnt, and others executed in various ways by Herod's order. Being suspected of having privately encouraged the tumult, Matthias was deprived of his high-priesthood, and the office given to Joazar, the brother of his wife.

In the mean time the disease of Herod became more loathsome and intolerable. It appears to have been an erosion of the bowels and other viscera by worms, which occasioned violent spasms and the most exquisite tortures, until he at length became a mass of putrefaction. Experiencing no benefit from the warm baths of Calirrhoe beyond Jordan, he gave up all hopes of recovery, and after having distributed presents among his attendants and soldiers, he returned to Jericho. His sufferings were not likely to humanise his naturally savage disposition. He was convinced, by the recent outbreak, that his death would occasion no sorrow in Israel, and therefore, to oblige the nation to mourn at his death, he sent for the heads of the most eminent families in Judea, and confined them in prison, leaving orders with his sister Salome and her husband Alexas to put them all to death as soon as he should have breathed his last. This sanguinary design was, however, not executed by them.

At length Herod received full powers from Rome to proceed against his son Antipater. At this intelligence, the dying tyrant appeared to revive; but he soon after attempted suicide, and, although prevented, the wailing cries, usual in such cases, were raised throughout the palace for him, as if he were actually dead. When Antipater, in his confinement heard these well-known lamentations, he attempted by large bribes to induce his guard to permit his escape; but he was so universally hated for procuring the death of the sons of Mariamne, that the guard made his offers known, and Herod ordered his immediate execution. On the fifth day after, Herod himself died, shortly before the Passover, in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh from his appointment to the throne. Before his death was announced Salome, as if by his order, liberated the nobles confined in the hippodrome, whose death she had been charged to execute, but dared not, had she been so inclined. His corpse, under the escort of his life-guard, composed of Thracians, Germans, and Gauls, was carried with great pomp to Herodium, and there buried.

Herod had ten wives, two of whom bore him no children, and whose names history has not preserved.

By his *final* will, Herod (who had formerly obtained the permission of Augustus to dispose of the succession as he pleased) divided his dominions among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. To Archelaus he bequeathed that which was distinc-

tively considered the kingdom, comprising Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Antipas he appointed tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Philip tetrarch of the territory comprised in the districts of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, Batanea, and Paneas. The respective value of these territories may be estimated by the amount of yearly revenue which each of these princes derived from his portion. Archelaus obtained six hundred talents from his kingdom, Antipas two hundred talents from his tetrarchy, and Philip one hundred talents from his. The will was of no force until confirmed by Augustus; and this confirmation was ultimately obtained, although most of the other parties interested disputed the pre-eminence which it assigned to Archelaus. But, although the territorial distribution was approved by the Roman emperor, he declined to give to Archelaus any higher title than that of *Ethnarch* until he should show himself worthy to be a king: this he never did. But the Jews, heedless of these distinctions, looked upon him as a king, and gave him the regal title. Having obtained this recognition, Archelaus paid little heed to the promise of good government which, at the beginning, he had made from the golden throne in the temple-court. He proved as tyrannical as his father, without any traces of those splendid qualities which gleamed through the darkness of Herod's character.

In one thing he complied with the general wish of the people, by deposing the high-priest Joazar, who was highly unpopular in consequence of having superseded the former high-priest Matthias, who (as we have seen) was deposed on account of the encouragement he was supposed to have given to the rioters in the celebrated affair of the golden eagle. In the room of Joazar, his brother Eleazer was raised to the pontificate, and, soon after, Jesus the son of Sia. In the end, the people became so completely worn out with the tyrannies and disputes of the Herod family that they sent a complaint to Rome on the subject; and renewed an application which they had previously made—that an end might be made of this paltry game of sovereignty, and that the territory should be made in form, as well as in fact, a Roman province. The strong and urgent representations of the principal Jews and Samaritans at length secured the attention of Augustus, who, having by inquiry satisfied himself of the mal-administration of Archelaus, deposed him, confiscated his property, banished him to Vienne in Gaul, and declared his territory a Roman province. 6 A.D.

The census or enrolment which had been commenced, but was suspended, at the time of the birth of Christ, was now carried into effect. The same Cyrenius who had acted on the former occasion, and who had now become president of Syria, entered the country with an armed force to confiscate the property of Archelaus, and to complete the census. This was submitted to by the nation generally, as formerly it had submitted to the enrolment; and Cyrenius, having completed his mission, returned to Antioch, leaving Coponius as procurator of Judea. Joazar, who was very favourable to the new order of things, and had done much to forward its introduction, was restored to the high-priesthood; and his influence, together with the presence of the procurator, maintained the nation for a time in a state of peace and subordination.

It was not long, however, before the country was again thrown into a flame by the appearance of Judas the Gaulonite—or the Galilean, as he is called by Josephus elsewhere, and by St. Luke (Acts v. 36), (who had made himself terrible in the early part of the reign of Archelaus as a daring and successful captain of banditti)—in the character of a patriot; which character long continued to be taken by the robber chiefs of ensuing years, as it gave them a sort of excuse for allowing their men to exercise their real vocation upon those who refused to adopt their view of public affairs. The ground taken by this man, and by a turbulent Pharisee of the name of Sadok, was well chosen, and sure at all times to rouse the sympathies of a large proportion of the people, and more especially at this time, when the expectation of the speedy appearance of a native king, the Messiah, was prevalent. Although, therefore, Judas was

slain, and his adherents dispersed, the principles took deep root among the Zealots, as they called themselves. These were, that the payment of tribute to the Romans was not only downright slavery, but was unlawful in itself, and utterly repugnant to the theocracy, since God was their only king. It was certainly rather late now to fall back upon this first principle of the theocracy; and at this time it had been produced less by anything else than by the Pharisaic pride which had infected the mass of the nation, and which made them look down upon the rest of the world as idolators and slaves, and themselves as the special favourites of heaven, the only free people, and as alone destined for ultimate greatness, and to rise very soon upon the wreck of other nations, which their eagerly expected Messiah would put under their feet. It was owing mainly to the prevalence of this state of feeling, that the Jews were not only blinded from recognising in Jesus Christ the Messiah they expected, but were led into those extravagancies which produced the troubles of subsequent years, and the ultimate overthrow of the nation. Undoubtedly the sentiments entertained by these persons were, in the main, *founded on* the sound principles of the old theocracy; but they were not now under the old theocracy, neither were they the Jews of the old theocracy; and the views now produced and acted on were not such as they—or perhaps any Jews since the Captivity—had a right to entertain.

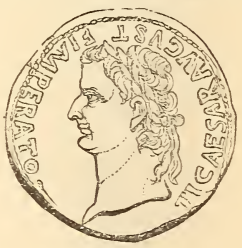
It is necessary now to regard Judea as a Roman province; being one of the provinces on the outskirts of the empire, which the emperors reserved under their own jurisdiction, as was the case with the whole of Syria, to which it was now attached. The procurators were appointed by them without any reference to the senate. They had not only the charge of collecting the imperial revenues, but also had the power of life and death; and on account of their high dignity they are called "Governors" (ἡγεμόνες) in the New Testament. Their duties chiefly consisted in collecting and remitting the tribute, in the administration of justice, and in the repression of tumults. In many respects they resembled the really dependent pashas of the modern Turkish empire. Some of them held independent jurisdictions, while others were subject to the nearest proconsul or president, as those of Judea were to the president of Syria. The procurators of Judea resided principally at Cæsarea, which became the civil and military, as Jerusalem was the ecclesiastical, metropolis of the province. They occupied the splendid palace which had been built there by Herod. On the great festivals, however, they repaired to Jerusalem, that by their presence and authority order might be maintained among the crowds which assembled on such occasions at the holy city. For this purpose they were attended by cohorts or regiments of soldiers (each consisting of about one thousand men). The usual force at the disposal of the procurator was ordinarily six cohorts, of which one was permanently stationed at Jerusalem, and the other five at Cæsarea, where they were ready for any service which might require them. This force sufficed generally to keep the province in order; but, if an increase were at any time needed, it could be procured from the governor of Syria.

The payment of taxes to the Romans was, as we have seen, considered by the Jews as an intolerable grievance, although not greater than, under previous conquerors, and in a different state of the national mind, they had endured with patience. From this it happened that those natives whom the Roman procurators employed in collecting the taxes were detested as plunderers in the cause of the Romans, as betrayers of the liberty of their country, and as abettors of those who had enslaved it. From the odium attached to the office few men of character would accept it; and hence the *Publicans* (as they were called) were in general a loose-principled set of men, whose conduct in taking every means of turning their position to their own advantage greatly increased the ill repute in which the body was held. Apart from the grievances connected with the tribute, the Jews enjoyed under the Romans a very fair degree of freedom. They were perfectly unrestrained in worshipping

God in their own way, following their own rites, and observing their own customs; and they were to a considerable extent governed by their own laws. The administration of religious ceremonies was, as before, committed to the high-priest and to the Sanhedrim, which last tribunal was still permitted to adjudicate in matters which may be called ecclesiastical, although its penal sentences could not be executed until they had been examined and confirmed by the Roman governor, who then committed its execution to his own officers. But with all this, there was the tribute, and there was the equal annoyance, to so exclusive a people, of the constant and domineering presence in their cities of the Romans, whom they could not but regard as an unclean and idolatrous people, and who were not at all celebrated for their forbearing or gentle treatment of the subject nations in which they were quartered; and when to this we add the avarice and cruelty of the procurators, and the frauds and extortions of the publicans, we may find no difficulty in accounting for the state of feverish irritation into which the nation soon fell, and which was the precursor of the maddened outbreaks which ultimately ensued.

It was not, however, from the Romans that those calamities of the nations proceeded which made the record of their remaining history to be, like the roll of Ezekiel, "written within and without" with "lamentation, and mourning, and woe." Their own rulers multiplied their vexations, and debarred them from the enjoyment of the comforts and immunities which were still left to them by the Roman magistrates. The leaders of the people and the chief priests were, according to the testimony of Josephus, profligate wretches who purchased their appointments by bribes and other acts of iniquity, and who maintained their ill-acquired authority by the most abominable crimes. The inferior priests, and those who possessed the least shadow of authority, had, for the most part, become in the highest degree abandoned and dissolute. Excited by these corrupt examples, the multitude ran headlong into every kind of iniquity; and, by their endless seditions, extortions, and robberies, soon armed against themselves both the justice of God and the vengeance of man.

The tetrarchies of Antipas and Philip were not affected by this new order of things. They ruled their states with the usual power of tetrarchs, and without the immediate interference of the Romans. Antipas sedulously cultivated the favour of Tiberius, who



[Tiberius.]

succeeded Augustus in 14 A.D. With him Antipas, who is the "Herod" of the Gospels, was in high favour. Hence he gave the name of *Tiberias* to the fine city which he built on the western border of the lake of Gennesareth, and from which the lake itself soon acquired the name of "the Sea of Tiberias." Earlier in his reign Antipas had enlarged and strongly fortified the town of Sepporis, and made it the capital of Galilee. The other tetrarch, Philip, was by no means backward in this sort of stone and mortar adulation; for he gave the name of *Julias* (after the empress) to the ancient fishing village of Bethsaida, which he improved into a fine city, and which lay on his portion of the lake's border. The whole town of Paneas, about the source of the Jordan, he also much enlarged and adorned, and then gave it the name of *Cæsarea*, to which *Philippi* was soon added, to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea.

Meanwhile the Roman procurators in Judea followed, without hesitation, the example set by Herod of removing the incumbents of the high-priesthood at their pleasure. Hence the changes were frequent in an office intended to be for life. In the changes in this office under the Greek kings of Syria some regard was paid to the real pontifical family; but in

these later days any priest, and ultimately any Levite, might aspire to the high-priesthood, if he could contrive to recommend himself to the favourable notice of the governor. It thus happened that there were often living several persons who had been high-priests. These enjoyed for the remainder of their lives privileges and distinctions beyond other priests—the rather as they generally found means of enriching themselves during their turn of office. Joazar, who had been restored by Cyrenius, it was soon after found necessary to remove, on account of the unpopularity he incurred by the part he took during the insurrection of Judas of Galilee. The office was then given to Ananus (the Annas of Luke iii. 2), the son of Seth, who continued to occupy it until the year 21 A.D., when Valerius Gratus, the first procurator under Tiberius, deposed him, and promoted Ishmael, the son of Phabus, to that dignity. Not satisfied with this choice, the procurator removed him the next year, and appointed Eleazer, the son of the former high-priest, Ananus, in his place. But in the course of the year Eleazer, in his turn, was compelled to give place to Simon, the son of Camith, who, in the following year, was also deposed, and Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, son-in-law to Ananus, was appointed in his stead. 24 A.D.

The procurators themselves were frequently changed, as may be seen by the table at page 475, and the change was seldom for the better. The undisguised disgust of the Jews at idolatry, and therefore at things which the Romans held sacred, and the pollution which they attached to the presence of idolators, and consequently to their Roman masters, was highly irritating to those proud and not naturally intolerant conquerors. They repaid in kind what must have seemed to them the unsocial intolerance of the Jews, and took frequent opportunities of exhibiting a marked contempt for their religion and law, and of subjecting them to much oppressive treatment. Of the procurators who governed Judea Pontius Pilate is the best known, and the most frequently mentioned in history. He is supposed to have been a native of Italy. He was a tyrant—cruel and vindictive when left to the undisturbed exercise of his power, but timid and pusillanimous when opposed. He made the tribunal of justice the instrument of his avarice, and hence the seat of government became a general scene of extortion and corruption. When not acted upon by any selfish or guilty feeling, his conduct appears to have been determined rather by fear or by expediency than by any fixed principles of duty, as in the well-known example when our Saviour was brought before him. From the first his conduct excited extreme dissatisfaction in the country. It had not been usual for the Roman soldiers to carry their standards into Jerusalem, as it was well known that the Jews felt the strongest objections to them, on account of the images which they bore, and which they considered idolatrous. This forbearance was very remarkable under all the circumstances, and considering the reverence with which the standards were regarded by the Romans themselves. Pilate resolved to discontinue it; and when, therefore, a body of soldiers were sent from Samaria into winter quarters at Jerusalem, they were directed to carry their standards into the city by night. On this many of the Jews repaired to Cæsarea to entreat the governor to order the removal of the standards. At first they were treated with neglect, and then with insult, but behaved with so much temper and resolution that they ultimately carried their point. It is also stated, on the authority of Philo, that Pilate set up shields with idolatrous inscriptions at Jerusalem; on which the Jews sent a complaint to the emperor, and obtained an order for their removal, accompanied by a rebuke to Pilate for his conduct. It was, perhaps, in resentment for this that the governor undertook to construct an aqueduct to bring water to Jerusalem from a fountain twenty miles off, not from any real desire to benefit the city, but that he might drain the treasury of the temple by demanding funds for the work. On this account, when on his throne at Jerusalem, he was beset by the most earnest entreaties by the citizens; but he sent disguised soldiers among the multitude, armed with daggers and bludgeons, concealed under their garments, by whom

several were slain, and others trampled to death in the crowd.

It was in the year 26 A.D., about autumn, being the second year of Pilate's administration, that John the Baptist appeared from the wilderness, announcing himself as the promised Harbinger of the promised Deliverer. He was heard with much attention, and was followed by crowds, to whom he preached, and whom he baptized in the river Jordan. He was highly in favour with the people, as every one expected a Deliverer; and John's mission was in consonance with that expectation, as he did not at first define the spiritual nature of the Deliverance, although to the discerning it might have been intimated by the burden of all his preaching—Repentance.

The year following, among those who came to be baptized in Jordan, by John, was JESUS, who had hitherto abode with his parents in obscure and humble circumstances at Nazareth, of which place he was popularly supposed to be a native, although really born in Bethlehem of Judea. The prophet of the wilderness recognised Him as he walked, and cried in the audience of the multitude,—"*Behold the* LAMB OF GOD, *which taketh away the sins of the world!*" A grand declaration, comprehending a clear intimation of the character of the salvation He was to work, *from sin*, and its extent—*the world!* That He should come to be baptized of him, astonished John—"*I* have need to be baptized of THEE, and comest THOU to *me?*" But he submitted; and after the baptism the testimony of John was confirmed by the voice from heaven, which cried, "THIS is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

John soon after had an opportunity of preaching to the troops of Herod-Antipas, the tetrarch, then on their march into Arabia Petræa, with the king of which, named Aretas, a quarrel had arisen, on account of the conduct of Herod to the daughter of that prince, to whom he had been married. On a journey to Rome Antipas had visited his brother, Herod-Philip (son of the second Mariamne), and had there commenced an intrigue with his wife, Herodias (daughter of Aristobulus, the son of the Asamonean Mariamne), and promised that on his return he would put away the daughter of king Aretas, and marry her. The Arabian princess, coming to the knowledge of this, fled to her father to Petra, and complained to him of her wrongs. Herod on his return performed his promise to Herodias, by taking her from his brother, and marrying her himself. This was so deeply resented by Aretas that he raised an ostensible question about boundaries, and a war commenced. Herod, betrayed by deserters, was beaten, and the whole army dispersed. According to the testimony of Josephus, the whole nation joined in attributing this loss to the Divine judgment against Herod for the murder of John the Baptist. For while the military operations were in progress, John had in the most unreserved terms condemned the conduct of Antipas in taking away the wife of his living brother; and his influence with the people was so great that Herod dreaded the consequences of his reprobation, and put him in prison, where, contrary to the first intention of the tetrarch, his death was compassed by the vindictive Herodias, in the manner known to all our readers.

Meanwhile Jesus had commenced his great mission, confirming it by many miracles. His own mission was confined to the Jews, because it was necessary that their acceptance or rejection of him should be completed, before the fulness of his doctrine could be opened to the Gentiles. We all know how he was rejected in his proper character, although there were times when the mass of the people would have acknowledged him as the Messiah, and have made him their king, if he had not refused to sanction the delusion under which they acted, or to be received in any character but that which he claimed. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." That rejection of him was formally completed (31 A.D.) when they cried aloud for his blood, and had it; and had, too, its dread penalties, which they invoked—"His blood be on us and on our children!" It was merely that their peculiar mission as a nation should be accomplished, by their recognition or rejection of the Christ of God, that their existence as a nation had been

prolonged to that time. After this their peculiar vocation was at an end, "the veil of the temple was rent," the middle wall of partition was broken down*, the nation was cast loose from the *special* mercies of God, and left to work out its own destruction by its own imaginations and devices. This was what Jesus himself predicted, just prior to his final rejection:—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. *Behold, your house is left unto you* DESOLATE." Desolate indeed!

It may very safely be said that, apart from the history of Christ altogether, no impartial reader of the concluding portions of the Jewish history can fail to recognise that the conduct which was produced in the Jews, by mistaken notions and expectations regarding the promised Messiah, was the primary cause of their ruin as a nation.

In the same year in which Christ was crucified, the mild and just government of the tetrarch, Philip, was terminated by his death; and as he left no sons, his territories of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, Batanea and Abila were united to the Roman province of Syria.

Pilate's oppressive administration in Judea continued to the year 35 A.D. At length, having caused the slaughter of a great number of Samaritans, who had no warlike intention, but had been induced to assemble in large numbers on Mount Gerizim, by the promises of a pretended Messiah, strong complaints of his conduct were forwarded to Vitellius, the president of Syria, who ordered him to proceed to Rome, to give an account of his administration to the emperor. Tiberius was dead before he arrived, but his successor, Caius Caligula, banished him to Vienne, in Gaul, where he is said to have committed suicide. Vitellius had been at Jerusalem, early in the same year, at the Passover, and was received with honour and distinction; and out of compliment to the inhabitants for their respect and obedience, he remitted, for that year, the duty upon all the fruit exposed for sale in the city. He staid only three days; but before his departure he deposed the high-priest Caiaphas, and appointed in his place Jonathan, the son of that Ananus or Annas, who has already been mentioned. Vitellius again went to Jerusalem soon after the transaction which occasioned Pilate to be sent home, and was on this occasion accompanied by Herod-Antipas. He then took the high-priesthood from Jonathan, whom he had so lately appointed, and gave it to his brother Theophilus. He was still at Jerusalem, when intelligence arrived of the death of Tiberius and the succession of Caligula, on which he took from the people the oaths of allegiance to the new emperor, and returned to Antioch.

[Caligula.]

Caligula appointed Marullus to be procurator of Judea, in the room of Pontius Pilate; and his arrival superseded the governor (Marcellus), whom Vitellius had appointed to act temporarily. At the same time the new emperor conferred the vacant tetrarchy of Philip, and the adjoining tetrarchy of Abilene, upon AGRIPPA (called Herod in the Acts of the Apostles), the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great and the Asamonean Mariamne. Agrippa had experienced many changes of fortune. He had been sent to Rome before the death of Herod the Great, and had there been brought up with Drusus, the son of Tiberius. By his profuse generosity he soon squandered his property, but gained, as he supposed, many friends at the imperial court. But on the untimely death of Drusus, Tiberius removed all the associates of the young prince, as their presence would only serve to remind him of his loss and of the disappointment

* Ephesians ii. 14.

of his hopes. Thus finding himself speedily reduced to the utmost distress, he returned to Judea, where he received some assistance from his relations, but not sufficient to supply his extravagant expenditure. After some misfortunes and some ill conduct he returned to Italy, where he was cast into prison and laden with chains, by order of the emperor, because the charioteer, who drove Agrippa and Caligula, betrayed that he had overheard the former express a wish that the old emperor would die and make room for the latter. When, soon after, Tiberius actually died, one of the first acts of Caligula was to release his friend from his prison, to clothe him with purple, to place a diadem upon his brow, and to exchange the iron chain, which he had worn on his account, for one of the same weight in gold; he then bestowed upon him the two vacant tetrarchies which we have mentioned, with the title of KING.

This exaltation of one whom he had treated as an inferior and dependent was wormwood to Herod-Antipas, and still more so to his notorious wife, Herodias, who was devoured with envy at the advantage gained by her brother (for such he was), and ceased not urging her husband to endeavour to procure for himself also the royal title: they accordingly went together to Rome. But Agrippa, having learned their design, sent his freedman, Fortunatus, with a letter and verbal instructions to prejudice the claim of Antipas, and that with such success that in seeking what he had not, he lost what he had, being deposed from his tetrarchy and banished to Vienne, in Gaul. Herodias voluntarily shared his disgrace, declining the pardon and favour which was offered to her on the ground of her relationship to Agrippa. That fortunate person received his uncle's tetrarchy, of Galilee and Perea, as an addition to his kingdom, together with all his treasures.

Caligula began to reign well, but soon became insane, under the consciousness of unlimited power. Among his lunacies was that of deeming the Jews disaffected, because they were the only people who would not render to him the divine honours which he claimed. He therefore issued imperative orders that his statue should be set up in the very sanctuary of the temple of Jerusalem. Foreseeing the determined opposition of the Jews, Petronius, the governor of Syria, delayed the execution of this order, under the pretext of procuring the best materials and most eminent artists for the work. Meanwhile the emperor was induced by the humble remonstrances of the Jews, and still more by the timely and judicious intercession of Agrippa, who happened to be then at Rome, to relinquish a purpose which had filled Judea with such consternation, that the business of life was for a time suspended, and the fields left uncultivated.

Agrippa was still at Rome, when Caligula was assassinated in 41 A.D.; and his influence, which was very considerable at Rome, was

[Claudius.]

employed with such effect as to help to induce the senate to recognise the act of the soldiers who had dragged Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, from his retirement, and proclaimed him emperor. The senate and many influential Romans had indulged the dream of re-establishing the republic. This service was gratefully acknowledged by the emperor, who relinquished to his government Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, with the title of king of Judea. The broken kingdom of Herod the Great was thus re-united in the person of his grandson, whose dominion was indeed larger by the tetrarchy of Abilene. Claudius also entered into a solemn alliance with the new king, and issued several edicts in favour of the Jews: moreover, at Agrippa's request, the emperor bestowed the kingdom of Chalcis on his brother Herod. Soon after Agrippa obtained even the honour of the consulship, and Herod was appointed prætor,

and both became entitled to enter the Roman senate, and were allowed to pay their compliments to the emperor in Greek, although Latin was usually employed. Nor were these honours so empty as some may imagine.

On his return to Judea the king was well received by all his subjects, not only on account of the benefits which his influence at Rome had already procured, and afforded the means of procuring, and his obvious desire to make his government beneficial, but on account of his descent from the Asamonean family, the memory of which was still cherished by the Jewish nation with affection and respect. One of his first acts was to depose Theophilus, the high-priest, and others were appointed and changed in such quick succession as to suggest that in those evil days the king had great difficulty in finding persons suitably qualified for that distinguished office. On his arrival at Jerusalem, many thank-offerings, and many acts of beneficence, evinced his gratitude to God for the favour shown to him; and the golden chain, with which the emperor, Caligula, replaced the iron that had once entered into his soul, he hung up conspicuously in the temple, as a votive offering and as a monument of the mutations of human affairs.

Agrippa appears to have been sincerely attached to the Jewish religion as he found it; but he endeavoured, as far as he durst, to lead the Jews into greater accommodation of manners to the Romans than had yet prevailed, feeling, probably, that it was only by this that their relation to the Romans could become tolerable. The grant to the Jews, by Claudius, of perfect liberty to follow the customs of their own religion and law *in every country*, had been accompanied by the significant hint to themselves that they were expected to be peaceable, and that while they claimed so much respect to their peculiar religious opinions, they would henceforth refrain from treating the religion of others with contempt. The Jews, however, could not be induced to take any interest in the bloody games of the amphitheatre, to which Agrippa endeavoured to conciliate them, and for this singularity they are entitled to our respect. The king had an insatiate craving after popularity, which made him anxious to do whatever might please the Jews, whether right or wrong in itself. Hence, rather than from any innate intolerance or cruelty of nature, he persecuted the Christians, who, since the persecution with which the conversion of St. Paul (35 A.D.) is connected, to this period (44 A.D.) of Agrippa's reign, appear to have been unmolested in Jerusalem. The first who fell a sacrifice to Agrippa's zeal for popular favour was the Apostle James, one of the sons of Zebedee, and brother of John, who was beheaded. Perceiving how pleasing this act was to the Jews, he proceeded also to imprison Peter, with the intention of destroying him after the Passover. The miraculous deliverance of the Apostle from this danger is known to all our readers.

It was not long after this that Agrippa celebrated games at Cæsarea in honour of the emperor. On the second day of the solemnity he appeared in the theatre to give audience to the Tyrians and Zidonians. At the close of his oration the sun so shone upon his jewels and his robe of silver as to give him a peculiarly radiant appearance; whereupon the heathen multitude, according to the customs of that time, hailed him as a god. The king did not repel this idolatrous homage, but received it with complacency, and almost instantly he was stricken with a painful and humbling disease of the intestines, very similar to that by which Herod the Great had been consumed. During his illness all the people were in tears, praying God to spare the life of their beloved king. But he died in the fifth day after the attack, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, the seventh of his reign, and at the close of the third of his rule over all Palestine, 44 A.D. He was deeply lamented by all his Jewish subjects; but the Greek inhabitants of Cæsarea and Sebaste testified the most indecent joy, and the Roman soldiers behaved in a very disorderly manner.

Herod Agrippa left two daughters, and a son, Agrippa, only seventeen years of age. Claudius was inclined to have given him his father's kingdom; but by the advice of his friends, he deferred it for a time on account of the youth of the young prince. Judea

was then again made a Roman province, the government of which was given to Cuspius Fadius.

A difference, soon after, between the Romans and Jews, about the custody of the sacerdotal dress and ornaments of the high-priest, involved so many points of difficulty to a Roman, that Claudius was induced, for the sake of peace, to place HEROD, king of Chalcis, over the temple and treasury, with the power of appointing the high-priests.

The famine in Palestine, which is alluded to in Acts ix. 27, &c., as being foretold by Agabus, commenced during the administration of Fadius (45 A.D.), and continued under that of his successor. It was very severe. While it continued, the Jews were most bountifully assisted by Izates, the king of Adiabene, and by his mother Helena—both proselytes to Judaism. The Christians at Jerusalem were also most liberally relieved by the churches in foreign parts, especially by that at Antioch, whose bounty was taken to Judea by Paul and Barnabas. Under Fadius there arose a false Messiah, who persuaded a great multitude of people to take their property and follow him to the Jordan, promising that, as Joshua did of old, he would stop the course of the river by his word, and lead them over on dry ground. But the infatuated crowd was overtaken by a body of Roman horse and foot, by whom they were dispersed. Some were killed, and some taken prisoners. Among the latter was the impostor himself, who was beheaded, and his head sent to Jerusalem to be exhibited to the populace, to refute his pretensions to divine power. Josephus calls this impostor Theudas, but he is probably mistaken as to the name; for, according to Luke (Acts v. 36), Theudas made his appearance before Judas the Gaulonite, and had a party of only four hundred men, by whom he was at last forsaken.

Fadius resigned his troublesome office in 46 A.D., and was succeeded by Tiberius Alexander, an apostate Jew, son of the Alabarch* of Alexandria, and nephew to the celebrated Philo-Judæus†. He did nothing remarkable save crucifying the two sons, Jacob and Simon, of the notorious Judas the Gaulonite, doubtless for spreading the opinions of their father, and for attempting to excite the people against the Romans.

In 47 A.D. Herod of Chalcis died, just after he had deposed Joseph, the son of Camus, to whom he had given the high-priesthood two years before, and raised to the pontificate Ananias, the son of Nebedeus. Claudius gave the dominion of Herod and his authority over the temple to AGRIPPA, but still maintained Judea as a Roman province. In the same year the procurator Tiberius was recalled, and Ventidius Cumanus appointed in his stead, from whose administration may be dated the beginning of those disturbances which ended in the ruin of the Jewish nation.

According to custom, Cumanus was present with his cohorts at Jerusalem to keep the peace during the Passover of 48 A.D. These were the same disorderly cohorts whose disgraceful conduct at Cæsarea, on the death of Agrippa, had induced Claudius to determine to send them out of the country, which

* The Jews who were scattered abroad, and had taken up their residence in countries distant from Palestine, had rulers of their own. The person who sustained the highest office among those who dwelt in Egypt was denominated ALABARCHUS; the magistrate at the head of the Syrians was denominated ARCHON; while the numerous and powerful Jews who abode in Babylonia called their chief the PRINCE OF THE CAPTIVITY.

† PHILO-JUDÆUS, or Philo the Jew, was a native of Alexandria, of a priestly race, and brother to Lysimachus the Alabarch, or chief, of the numerous Jews inhabiting that city. He was a man of great accomplishments and learning, well versed in Grecian literature, and his mind so deeply imbued with the philosophy of Plato, that he acquired the name of the Jewish Plato. His rank and character pointed him out as a suitable leader of the deputation sent by the Jews of Alexandria to Caligula to exonerate themselves from the charge of disaffection which the Greek inhabitants of that city had eagerly founded on their refusal to worship the emperor, or to receive his images. Their right to the citizenship of Alexandria was also questioned. At Rome they were better received than they expected, and appear to have conducted themselves with much tact and discretion. The emperor gave them an interview, which left the impression upon his mind that they were rather mad than wicked in their refusal to worship him; but he dismissed them without announcing any decision. Philo himself wrote a very interesting account of this mission, which we still possess, together with a portion of his other works, which were numerous. He wrote in Greek: and an edition of his works was first printed at Paris in 1552. But the best edition is that of Dr. Mangey, printed at London in 1742 in two folio volumes. None of Philo's works have been translated into English except the narrative of his mission to Caligula.

intention he was unhappily led to abandon. A general tumult was produced throughout the city by the conduct of one of the soldiers stationed at the gates of the temple to preserve order, who disrobed himself and indecently exposed his person during the holy solemnities. Taking this obscene act as an insult upon their God, the feelings of the Jews were highly excited, especially when they found that the soldier was not punished at their demand. A tumult ensued; and every reader of the New Testament knows the peculiar wildness and frenzy of a Jewish tumult: and Cumanus, finding it impossible to restore tranquillity by gentle means, ordered all the troops to the scene of the commotion. On this, apprehending probably a general massacre, the multitude dispersed in such haste and confusion that they crushed and trampled one another to death; and it is said by Josephus that not less than ten thousand persons perished*. Not long after this, a servant of the emperor having been murdered by robbers on the road near Bethhoron, a body of soldiers was sent thither, who plundered all the villages in that neighbourhood, and made prisoners of the principal inhabitants. At this time one of the Roman soldiers seized a copy of the Pentateuch, and tore it in pieces before the people, with words of insult and blasphemy. On this the Jews repaired to Cæsarea to demand the punishment of the soldier; and Cumanus, to put a stop to the growing excitement, ordered him to be beheaded.

The reader of the Gospels is aware that the Jews of Galilee "must needs pass through Samaria" whenever they "went up to Jerusalem to worship." But as the Samaritans held that, not Jerusalem, but their own Mount Gerizim, was "the place where men ought to worship," they were much disposed to molest and insult the Jews who, at the time of the great festivals, passed through their country to Jerusalem. Soon after the transaction just recorded, one of the Galilean Jews, thus journeying to worship at the temple, was murdered by the Samaritans. Justice being refused by Cumanus, who had been bribed by the aggressors, several of the more disaffected Jews conspired together to take vengeance for the murder with their own hands. They effected this by placing themselves under the command of two celebrated robber chiefs, led by whom they began to ravage the villages of the Samaritans. But Cumanus came upon them with his troops, and slew many of them, and took the rest prisoners. This increased the ferment to the highest pitch. It extended to Jerusalem, where the principal men of the nation went about clad in sackcloth, and with ashes on their heads, entreating the people to remain quiet. But their efforts were only partially successful; for many of the younger and less engaged members of the community, collected themselves into bands of robbers, and distressed the whole country by their depredations. The reader must remember that, as we have formerly intimated, the robbers of whom we read so much in this age, called themselves patriots; that is to say, they made the profession of holy zeal against the dominion of the Romans, a cloak for their depredations against all who were suspected of being content to enjoy peace under the Romans. Hence, as there were large bands of men, which collectively would have formed a large army, under the command of persons who, from their experience in operations which partook of a military character, were the only efficient leaders to which the discontented could look, it happened that all those who from warmth of temper or the force of circumstances were excited against the Romans, and against those who submitted to their rule—that is, to all the peaceable part of the nation—joined bands of robbers already existing, or formed new bands under old robber chiefs. This accounts for the immense numbers, the organised character, the large operations, and the peculiar pretensions of that portion of the Jewish population to which history gives the name of *robbers*, but to whom the term of *guerillas* would probably be now considered more applicable.

* The text of Josephus appears to be so much corrupted in its *numbers*, that it is open to conjecture that he wrote one thousand. It may, however, be well to remember what a prodigious multitude assembled at Jerusalem on such occasions.

The Samaritans now, in their turn, went to Tyre to complain to the prefect of Syria (H. Quadratus) of these proceedings; and the Jews recriminated by stating the origin of the quarrel, and the refusal of justice by Cumanus, whom they charged with the acceptance of bribes from the Samaritans. Quadratus, on inquiry, was inclined to decide against the Samaritans; but on becoming better acquainted with the part the Jews had taken in consequence, he turned against them, and treated them with great severity. In the end, however, he resolved to submit the whole affair to the emperor, and accordingly directed that some of the principal Jews and Samaritans should proceed to Rome, whither also the procurator and his tribune Celer (whose conduct had been particularly offensive to the Jews) were ordered to repair. Agrippa, who was still at Rome, exerted himself with great earnestness on behalf of the Jews; and the emperor did them justice. The principal Samaritans he ordered to be executed, Cumanus was banished; and as to Celer he was sent back to Jerusalem, and was there dragged through the streets, and beheaded, by order of the emperor. This mode of pacifying people, by allowing them to slake that thirst of blood which has itself been created by the practice of rendering barbarous justice for barbarous wrong, was in that age much resorted to, and this history offers frequent examples of it. 52 A.D.

It was about this time that Claudius gave to Agrippa the former tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, comprising Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Batanea, instead of the kingdom of Chalcis which he had before received. Agrippa, about this time also, gave his beautiful sister Drusilla in marriage to Azizus king of Emesa, who submitted to the rite of circumcision in order to obtain her.

The new procurator of Judea was Claudius Felix, originally a slave, and afterwards a freedman of the emperor. It is an observation at this day in the East, that no persons make such hard masters or rigid governors, as those who have themselves been slaves. So it was in the time of Felix, who ruled with all the tyranny ascribed to the despots of the East. It is true, however, that he found the country in a state which rendered strong measures necessary; but severe or tyrannous measures are not necessarily strong, although they are usually called such. The whole country was infested by robbers, professed assassins, and banditti of the worst description. The embers of sedition were still alive in the bosoms of the Gaulonitish party; and the imagination of the credulous multitude was kept in a state of dangerous excitement by a succession of daring impostors, who pretended to prophecy, or to have received the divine commission to deliver the nation from the Roman yoke. So numerous were they, that many of them were apprehended and executed almost every day; the people also who followed these deceivers were massacred by the Roman troops without mercy. Felix, although he acted with vigour in putting down these incessant disorders as they occurred, failed not to avail himself of the occasions which they offered of gratifying his avarice and his private resentments; and even while putting down the assassins with one hand, he hired their services with the other. If there was any man in Palestine to whom Felix was under more obligations than to another, it was to the high-priest Jonathan, who had greatly promoted his advancement to the distinguished post which he occupied. This venerable person he, however, caused to be murdered by the Sicarri, for no other cause than his frequent remonstrances with the governor about the acts of injustice and tyranny of which he was so often guilty.

Agrippa, as we have seen, had married his sister to the king of Emesa, who was devotedly attached to her. But Felix, who already had two wives, saw her, and was so struck by her extraordinary beauty that he induced her to forsake her husband and to marry him. When the nature and variety of this man's offences are considered, it is not wonderful that his guilty conscience was moved, when the eloquent apostle, a prisoner before him "reasoned of righteousness, temperance (chastity), and judgment to come." (Acts xxiv. 25.) Ultimately the rule of Felix be-

[Nero.]

came so intolerable to the Jews, that after he had misgoverned the province for ten years, they, in 59 A.D., sent a deputation to Rome, to complain of his conduct to the emperor. They obtained his recall; and he was only screened from further punishment by the influence of his brother Pallas with Nero, who had succeeded Claudius in 54 A.D.

Porcius Festus, the new procurator, was a much better man than his predecessor. He found Judea full of robbers, who devastated the country with fire and sword; the Sicarri also were very daring and numerous. The priests of the different orders had also found or made causes of quarrel among themselves, and acts of great and disgraceful violence had become common. The occasion of this disturbance appears to have been afforded by the frequent depositions of the high-priests, and by their persisting to claim the pontifical tithes after their deposition, whereby, as the number of deposed high-priests was very considerable, the inferior priests were left without adequate maintenance. The rigour with which these tithes were exacted, and the obstinacy with which the claim was resisted, led to the most scandalous outrages. The respective parties, not content to assail each other by force of arms, hired robbers and assassins to espouse their cause, so that Jerusalem and the whole country was kept in a continual ferment, and the temple itself was sometimes stained with blood. Against all these parties Festus acted with much vigour, by which, and the severe examples which he made, some degree of quiet was temporarily restored. Agrippa had no concern in the affairs of Judea, but such as arose from his being recognised as the principal person of the nation, and from his rule over the temple, and his power of appointing the high-priests. But these were circumstances of much importance. This is that king Agrippa, who, with Festus, heard Paul's defence at Cæsarea when the apostle declared his conviction that the king believed the prophets; and, in reply to the declaration, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," replied, with that force and delicacy peculiar to him, "I would to God that thou . . . . were both *almost* and *altogether* such as I am—*except these bonds*."

Festus died at the latter end of 62 A.D. The newly-appointed high-priest, Ananus, a proud Sadducee, took advantage of the interval between the death of one procurator and the arrival of another to call a council of the Jews, which, at his instigation, condemned to death the Apostle James, the cousin of Jesus Christ, who had long presided over the Christian church at Jerusalem, together with some other Christians, and stoned them to death. This act is mentioned by Josephus with much reprehension; for it appears from him the apostle had won the respect of the more sober-minded Jews, whose representations to the new procurator Albinus (63 A.D.) produced an angry letter to the high-priest; and similar representations to Agrippa procured his removal from the high-priesthood.

Albinus was a bad man, and thought only of turning his office to his own advantage. He indeed exerted himself to seize the robbers; but he immediately released those from whom he could obtain money, and punished only such as were unable to gratify his avarice. The rich secured his favour by presents, and the turbulent among the people attached themselves to some one who was rich enough to protect them. In the end the robbers acquired perfect impunity; for if a number of them were taken prisoners, they had only to seize some opulent person, whose friends, for his ransom, would pay the governor for the liberation of as many of the captured robbers as were required. Such was the operation of the practices of this procurator, that he acquired the reputation

of being the real head of all the robbers of the country.

It was during his administration that the Herodian temple was completely finished in all its parts. The prospect of throwing eighteen thousand men out of employment, seemed so dangerous, that various plans were considered for affording them work; and it was in the end decided by Agrippa to employ them in paving the city with white stone. This, however, did not last them long, or was discontinued: and in the time of the next procurator, they were thrown out of employment at a difficult crisis, the dangers of which they greatly aggravated, by joining themselves to the robber bands by which the country was devastated.

Albinus was recalled in 64 A.D., and Gessius Florus appointed in his stead. This man was the last, and probably the very worst, Roman governor the Jews ever had. There is scarcely a crime of which Josephus does not accuse him: and all his crimes were committed openly, without concealment or shame. He oppressed the people by all kinds of rapine and extortion: pillaging whole districts, robbing the sacred treasury, and encouraging the plunder of the robbers for a share of the booty. Thus, instead of endeavouring to assuage the gathering storm, he did his utmost to hasten it on and to augment its rage, in the hope that the public confusion might prevent complaints against his iniquitous conduct from being heard, and that a wider field of plunder might be opened to him. He succeeded but too well. It is, however, idle to attribute the war which speedily ensued to the misgovernment of Florus. We have written the preceding pages in vain, if the reader does not perceive that the elements of this warfare against the Romans had existed long before, and had been gathering such strength that the mutual strife could not long have been retarded had Gessius Florus never lived, or never governed in Judea. His proceedings may have hastened by a few years the progress of events, or other measures might for a few years have checked their operation; and that is all.

The government of Florus became so intolerable that many of the Jews emigrated to foreign countries, being no longer able to endure the miseries they were doomed to suffer at home.

Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, attended at Jerusalem at the Passover in 65 A.D. He was there surrounded by multitudes of Jews, who, while Florus stood laughing by, prayed him to have mercy upon the country. Cestius, instead of instituting proper inquiries into affairs, dismissed them with the promise that he would advise the procurator to govern more mildly in future. But this recommendation had no effect whatever on the plans and conduct of that unprincipled man. Cestius, struck by the immense concourse to Jerusalem at the Passover, endeavoured to form some notion of the numbers, by causing an estimate to be taken of the number of Paschal lambs which were slaughtered. This calculation was founded on the practice that not fewer than ten persons could sit down to eat the passover together. It is said to have been thus found that the Passover population of Jerusalem could not be less than two millions five hundred and fifty-six thousand, and might be three millions. One may at first view suspect these numbers to be a cipher too high; but it must be borne in mind that it was imperative on every adult male to repair to Jerusalem at that season, and that devout Jews then resorted to the holy city from countries far beyond the limits of Palestine.

There had been a quarrel of some standing between the Jews on one side, and the Greeks and Syrians on the other, respecting a claim of property to Cæsarea. The Jews asserted that the city belonged to them, as it was built by their king Herod, and they had been oppressed with taxes to pay for its buildings and its expensive mole: but it was contended on the other side, that it had always been considered a Greek city, and that the intention of the founder was manifested by the numerous temples and statues he had erected there, in conformity with the usages and mythology of the Greeks, but utterly abhorrent to the Jews and to their religion. The matter was so hotly

contested, that the parties had armed against each other in the time of Felix, who, however, succeeded in allaying the ferment for a time, by persuading each party to send a deputation to plead the matter before Nero. Up to this time the result had remained in suspense; but now, at the worst possible time, the decision arrived in favour of the Syro-Greeks, who were thereby raised above the Jews, and became entitled to the first rank as citizens. This has been considered the signal of the war which almost immediately after broke out in every quarter; and it is rightly so considered, for the gross insults which the Jews and their religion now received from the heathen inhabitants of Cæsarea, which insults were not avenged but aggravated by the governor, blew into a devouring flame the embers of mortal strife, which had been smouldering so long. That flame was soon extended to Jerusalem, by fresh insults from the procurator. In vain were all the efforts of the peaceably disposed among the Jews; in vain were all the remonstrances of king Agrippa, who forcibly represented the madness of opposing the conquerors of the world; the sword was drawn, and the scabbard cast too far away to be found again. The peace-making king was compelled to withdraw from the city, and to take his part with the Romans, hoping to moderate the horrors of the war he could not stop.

The refusal of Eleazer, the president of the temple, to offer the usual sacrifices in the temple for the prosperity of the Roman empire, may be taken as one of the marked points in this sad history, since it amounted to a renunciation of the national allegiance to the Romans, and as such was opposed by the earnest remonstrances of many of the chief priests and nobles. At Jerusalem, where the popular party greatly predominated, the Roman garrison was put to the sword; the palace of king Agrippa, and the public offices, were destroyed with fire; a son of Judas of Galilee, by name Menahem, made himself king in the city, and the barbarities committed by him and his robbers added new aggravations to the horrors which raged within. The high-priest Ananus, who had been driven to seek concealment in one of the aqueducts of the royal palace, was slaughtered by them, together with his brother Hezekiah. But the usurping king, with most of his adherents, was soon after cut off by the opposing faction of Eleazer.

The example of Jerusalem gave such encouragement to the discontented, that the declared and open revolt was soon extended throughout the country. In everything that looked like a regular engagement, the Jews were constantly beaten by the Romans, but nothing could quench their fury or abate their indignation; and a scene of rapine, cruelty, and bloodshed opened, which extended far beyond the limits of Palestine. Everywhere the popular party—now joined by the robbers, who took the name of Zealots, and who flocked in great numbers to take a leading part in the fray—massacred the Romans wherever they could master them, and plundered and devastated the cities and villages of the Syrians; and neither Romans nor Syrians were slow or measured in their retaliations. In every city, whether occupied wholly or only in part by Jews, there were, so to speak, two hostile armies, which glared with deadly enmity on each other; and no man anywhere found safety but in the local predominance of the party to which he belonged, nor always then. The reader will not expect us to enter into the details of the atrocities and unmitigated horrors of this period. We must conscientiously abstain from taking any part in familiarising the mind with more than the general idea of—Blood—the life of man—poured out upon the ground like water, to be gathered up no more, and of atrocities which rend violently aside the veil, which, from all but the individual, should hide the mysteries of man's worst nature. The antiquarian and the scholar will always turn for these details to the original and authentic narrative of Josephus, which is easy of access, and which no secondary narrative can ever supersede*.

Upon this general revolt of the Jews,

* We of course speak exclusively of the 'Jewish War;' for which he is the original and sole authority: whereas for the history contained in the 'Antiquities,' we are familiar with the original authorities of nearly all the authentic information he supplies.

Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, marched a powerful army into Palestine, which committed great ravages on its way to Jerusalem. Cestius encamped before the city for three days, hoping that the display of his forces would intimidate the inhabitants into overtures of peace. This result Agrippa, who was with Cestius, and the more peaceably disposed inhabitants of the city, endeavoured to bring about; but finding the expectation hopeless, the Romans set fire, on the fourth day, to Bezetha, the northern suburb of the city. Josephus assures us that if they had then attacked the city itself, during the consternation of the seditious, they might easily have taken it, and have put an end to the war at once. "But," adds the historian, "for the wickedness of the people, God suffered not the war to come to an end at that time." In fact, Cestius was dissuaded from the course indicated by the emissaries of Florus, who was anxious to prolong the war, and by whom he was persuaded to withdraw from the city. This strange procedure emboldened the previously panic-struck insurgents, who sallied forth, pursued Cestius in his retreat, harassed, and finally routed his army with great slaughter on the 8th of November, 65 A.D. This victory supplied the Jews with many engines of war and arms, which afterwards enabled them to prolong the defence of the city.

All thinking men among the Jews perceived that this victory would prove far more ruinons than any defeat which could have been sustained, being well assured that the Romans would not be content until rivers of blood had washed out the stain which their arms had incurred. The Christians in Jerusalem clearly recognised the signs which Christ himself had long before pointed out, and, in obedience to his injunctions, they hastened to quit the devoted city. A great proportion of them withdrew to Pella, beyond Jordan, whence they could watch the progressive fulfilment of their Lord's predictions, without being themselves involved in the dread consequences.

Cestius delayed not to send to the emperor an account of the disturbed state of Judea, and of the loss he had sustained, laying the whole blame upon Florus; and soon after he died, either from disease or from chagrin. Nero was in Achaia when this intelligence reached him. He immediately sent into Syria with the quality of president, and committed the conduct of the war in Palestine to Vespasian, an able and experienced commander, who was then with him, and had lately returned with a high reputation from his victories in Germany and Britain. His son, Titus, was at the same time sent to Alexandria, to conduct the fifth and tenth legions to the aid of his father. When he had been joined by these and by the auxiliary forces of the tributary kings, Antiochus (Comagene), *Agrippa*, Sohem, and Malchus (Arabia), Vespasian found his army amounted to sixty thousand men.

In the spring of 67 A.D. Vespasian led this great army from Ptolemais into Galilee. He recovered all the fortresses which the insurgents possessed in that province, in particular Gadara and Jotapata, the last of which was defended by no less a person than Josephus, the Jewish historian of the war, a priest of Asamonean descent, who had, after the defeat of Cestius, been appointed governor of Galilee by the provisional Jewish government. The place was defended with bravery and skill by the soldier-priest, but was in the end betrayed to the Romans. Josephus found refuge in a cavern, but was betrayed, and obliged to surrender. He was at first put in chains, but afterwards, when (as he says) he predicted that Vespasian would become emperor (then a very unlucky circumstance), he was treated with distinction and respect, especially after his prediction had been verified by the event. Throughout Galilee the Roman troops ravaged and destroyed cities, towns, and villages, showing no mercy, at first, to age or sex, that the defeat of Cestius might be avenged. Vespasian next chastised the Samaritans. Then he invaded the fortresses of Joppa, Tarichæa, and Gamala. The last-named place, taking its name from the camel-like outlines of the cliffs on which it was situate, offered a most obstinate resistance; enraged at which the Roman army massacred the inhabitants, and even slung the infants from the walls. Of all the in-

habitants only two women survived; for those who escaped the Romans destroyed themselves.

Meanwhile the Jews in Jerusalem quarrelled among themselves, and the city was oppressed by three turbulent and conflicting factions. The first, under John, held possession of the lower city, containing the ancient quarter of Salem and Mount Acra, westward; the second, under Eleazer, occupied the temple-quarter and Mount Moriah; and the third was in the upper city, "the city of David," on Mount Zion, southward. These factions were ultimately reduced to two; for at the last Passover, 70 A.D., John, under pretext of sacrificing in the temple, sent a band who destroyed Eleazer and his faction, and possessed themselves of the temple-quarter. These factions, however they disagreed in other things, and wasted their strength in conflicts, agreed perfectly, from the beginning, in harassing, plundering, and massacring the nobles and richer inhabitants, as well as numbers of the middle class who were peaceably disposed, and wished well to the Romans. To spite each other they also wantonly wasted the stores, and destroyed the storehouses containing corn, provisions, and other necessaries which might have enabled the city to sustain a siege of several years. But such are the suicidal acts of which the madness of faction is always guilty.

Meanwhile Vespasian tarried quietly at Cæsarea, giving rest and refreshment to his troops; and when urged by his impatient officers to hasten his attack upon the city, he prudently refused, remarking, that "It was far better to let the Jews destroy one another."

While he waited there were troubles at Rome. Nero, after a cruel and detested reign, which disgraced the promise of its commencement, destroyed himself, after having been condemned to death by the senate. Galba, Otho, Vitellius, followed in quick succession; and at length, contrary to all previous grounds of calculation, Vespasian himself was invested with the imperial purple by the legions in Judea. (July 3, 69 A.D.) Upon this the new emperor departed from Palestine to establish himself in Italy, leaving his son, Titus, to carry on the war.

[Titus.]

About the middle of April, the next year (70 A.D.), at the time of the Passover, when Jerusalem was, more even than ordinarily at that festival, thronged with people, Titus, with an army of sixty thousand Romans and auxiliaries, appeared before its walls. He probably made choice of this season with the view, that the immense number of useless persons, who would be shut up within the walls, might, by the vast consumption of provisions, the more speedily enable him to take by famine the city which strong fortifications and a triple wall now rendered almost impregnable. Nor was this expectation disappointed; for the miserable crowd had not long been shut up within the walls before famine, and its attendant pestilence, was experienced in forms so horrible, that no one, who has ever read the minute details contained in that history of the war which Josephus has given, forgets them as long as he lives. These we gladly pass over. Neither is it our intention to describe the operations of the siege, which can be of little interest, save to antiquarians and military men, and which may be found at large in the ample narrative of Josephus. It was the anxious wish of Titus to spare the city and its inhabitants; but they were determined to defend it to the uttermost, or perish in it, vainly expecting that God would not allow his city and his temple to be overthrown. Alas, they were no longer His!

Throughout the siege, which lasted four months, Titus adopted the policy of Pompey, employing the Sabbath days in constructing military machines, raising mounts, under-

mining the walls, without molestation, previous to his attacks on the following Sundays. Having employed the Paschal week in making preparations, he made his first assault the day it ended, Sunday, April 22, 70 A.D. A breach in the first wall was made, and possession of a part of the lower city on Sunday, May 6; and the rest of it was taken in the ensuing week. In order to confine the multitude, and prevent their escaping, Titus found it necessary to build a wall of circumvallation all around the city, fortified with towers at regular intervals. This stupendous work was finished in three days, without molestation from the besieged, advantage being taken of the Sabbath and two following days of "the feast of weeks," or Pentecost (June 2, 3, 4). The temple was burnt on Sunday, Aug. 5; and Titus, having prepared his machines on the Saturday (Sept. 1) for the attack of the upper city, took and destroyed it the day after, being Sunday, Sept. 2.

It is remarkable to notice how Titus was *driven* against his will, through the desperate defence made by the besieged, and their obstinate refusal of every offer of mercy and compromise, to work out the intentions of Divine Providence, and fulfil the predictions of Christ, by the utter destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem. The *temple* he was most anxious to save; but in spite of his most earnest efforts, it was fired by the soldiers, and burned with inextinguishable fury until reduced to a mere heap of ruins. While the flames were raging, the soldiers lost no time in plundering the sacred fabric of its costly ornaments, and of its numerous vessels of silver and gold. Some of these, including the golden candelabrum, the table of shew-bread, and the silver trumpets, were displayed in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, at Rome, and were figured on the triumphal arch erected on that occasion.

A horrid massacre followed the taking of the city; for the Romans, instigated by their fury at the unwonted opposition, and by revenge for the losses they had sustained, put to the sword all who came in their way, without respect to age, sex, or condition. It has been calculated from the aggregate of the numbers given by Josephus that the number of the persons who perished, during this calamitous war, at Jerusalem and in other parts of the country, amounted to no less than one million three hundred and thirty-nine thousand. Then the captives were sold for slaves in prodigious numbers, until the slave-markets were so completely glutted that no one would buy them at any price. Large numbers of the least valuable were sent to work in the mines, or to labour on the public works of Egypt and other near countries.

As to Jerusalem, the practice among the Orientals, with which the Roman soldiers were well acquainted, of burying money and valuables under ground in troublous times, induced the avaricious conquerors, after the capture of the city, to obey with alacrity the orders they had received to raze it to the ground. They even ploughed up the ground, in order to discover the hidden treasures. Thus was accomplished the old prophecy of Micah:—"Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house (the temple-mount) as the high places of the forest."

From the point which we have reached, we pause a moment to cast one rapid glance upon the scene which lies before us. We behold the seed of Abraham, a sullen and solitary people, walking through the earth, as beings in it, indeed, but not of it: existing in all parts of the world, but finding no *home* in any of its continents and isles; crushed everywhere, but not broken; cast down, but not destroyed: despised, until they became despicable: depressed, until their hearts and character lost much of their expansiveness and wealth, and became small and poor. Never was there a race whom all men, differing in all things else, have equally concurred to hate, afflict, press down, destroy; never a race of whom all men have in the same degree concurred to doubt that they had human hearts. But they had them, although their genial feelings were not allowed to expand in the broad sunshine of the world beyond those thresholds which the foot of no stranger ever crossed. The garb by which,

[Roman Medals, struck to commemorate the Conquest of Judea.]

in the land of which they were once the lords, and in other eastern countries, they are obliged to distinguish themselves as an unprivileged race, is not now required in the countries where the real distinction between them and the privileged inhabitants is the greatest. However much they may avail themselves of the appliances, and adapt themselves to the outward circumstances of high civilization, it is impossible not to perceive that they have *themselves* remained stationary in their principles and habits of conduct, but more, far more, in the habits and dispositions of their minds. We know not that the world ever offered so marked an instance of intellectual stagnation—petrifaction. Surely the Hebrew race is, in its mind and habits, as truly and purely the fragment of a former world, as are the dry bones of primitive creatures which, from time to time, men dig from the embedded rocks. The analogy is almost Scriptural; and the Scriptural question forcibly

recurs—"Can these dry bones live?"—"Lord God THOU knowest!" And what HE knows He has thought fit dimly to reveal, and to open the partial prospect of the coming time when the dry bones shall start into activity of life, proportioned to the deepness of that death in which they have laid so long. But this is a matter on which we may not touch. The glimpses of hope and glory in the distant view, after the dreary and desolate regions through which we have passed, is beheld with feelings which can only be adequately intimated in the simile of the poet:—

——————"As when a scout
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last, by break of cheerful dawn,
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen,—or some renown'd metropolis
With glist'ring spires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams."—MILTON.

THE END

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